

THE DOCTRINE OF
THE
" I N N E R L I G H T "
ITS EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT IMMEDIATELY
PRIOR TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY OF
FRIENDS, AND IN THAT SOCIETY FROM THE TIME OF
GEORGE FOX TO THE PRESENT DAY

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A THESIS

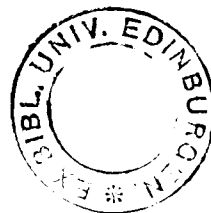
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P R E F A C E

The individual character of most religious groups takes its rise in some dominant idea or distinctive mode of conduct: it may be a question of theology, a theory of organization, or a combination of both. In the Society of Friends it has been the doctrine of the "Inner Light" - the belief that all men everywhere have been endowed by God with some emanation from himself. The following study will address itself to the task of showing how this doctrine was a determining one in the formation of the Society and has continued to be a central tenet in it up to the present time.

Because, so often, a religious genius is indebted to his contemporaries and immediate predecessors, in his particular field of interest, for something of his mind content and religious predisposition, and to show the historic connections by which the Society at its inception was linked up with similar movements, the study commences with a rapid survey of the mystical ideas and movements, both on the Continent and in England, which prior to and in the time of George Fox, most probably influenced his thought and certainly provided the conditions in England which made

possible the more rapid spread of Quakerism.

George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, not only left an indelible impression by the exercise of his personal influence upon the Society, but also profoundly influenced its thought by his own conceptions of what the doctrine of the "Inner Light" entailed. His Journal is a most comprehensive volume and from a study of it it is possible to arrive at an ordered idea of the implications of his conception of the "Inner Light." So it is that a detailed examination of that Journal, in this respect, is regarded as the logical starting place for a study of the development of the doctrine in the Society from his time to the present.

Fox attracted to the movement men of varying ability, but none so capable as the three to whom we have applied the term scholastics - Barclay, Penington, and Penn. The importance of Fox's Journal from an historical standpoint cannot be over-emphasized, but it was Barclay's famous "Apology" which set the standard for the interpretation of Fox's main idea for nearly 200 years. It would be unfair, however, to isolate the "Apology" from the works of Barclay's contemporaries, Penington and Penn, in essaying the work of discovering what was the general view of the

time regarding the "Inner Light."

Much of the passion with which the work of propaganda and organization was carried forth during the first years of Quakerism's expansion was undoubtedly due to the drive engendered by its ideas, but some of it was a natural reaction to the persecution directed against Dissenters. When the conflict between the State and Dissent was decreased by the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689 it brought some lessening of the heroic spirit in Quakerism, and inaugurated a gradual withdrawal of Quaker interest from the sphere of ordinary social life to a gradual concentration upon the more personal nature of their mystical faith. In this way there followed the barren period of Quietism in the study of which we shall notice the changed emphases in the doctrinal interpretations which it produced.

During the first period of the Evangelical revivals, due to the work of the Wesleys and Whitefield in the 18th. century, the isolation of Quakerism was proof against any breach being made in their theological positions by the doctrines of the Evangelical party. But the theology of Evangelicalism did, at the end of the century, begin to percolate into the Society, and by the beginning of the 19th.

century had started definitely to affect the outlook of many influential Friends. Between the fundamental positions of mysticism and the doctrines of Evangelicalism there is a definite opposition, and the period in which the Evangelical theology found some supporters in Quakerism was also the time of separations. Both in England and the United States of America deep-seated divisions of thought made their appearance and soon led to schisms in the Society like that caused by the "Beacon" controversy in England and the Hicksite trouble in America. The main contention was of necessity that concerned with the doctrine of the "Inner Light". We shall briefly examine the causes which led to the advent of Evangelical doctrine among Friends, note the divisions which occurred, and proceed to study the expressions of Quaker faith at this time.

Quakerism became, however, open to all the influences of contemporary life and thought. As a consequence of the separations of the Evangelical period it was in a more receptive mood to extraneous ideas than hitherto, but also less prone to dogmatism in the matter of interpretations of its own faith. It was in this spirit that it moved out of the difficult times of separations into the period of modern thought beginning towards the close of the 19th.

century. The great advances in the realms of theological, philosophical, psychological, and scientific thought have been welcomed by modern Quakerism; so much so that it is a difficult task to evaluate the more general attitude of modern Friends to contemporary viewpoints. Such an openminded attitude and democratic spirit characterize this period that within the body many and varied interpretations of the doctrine of the "Inner Light" find currency. In consequence the study of the modern period is both stimulating and fruitful after the painful episodes of the Evangelical period and the barrenness of the Quietist times.

Our study will tend to show, what is the author's conviction, that all through the history of the Society of Friends the one distinguishing doctrine has been that of the "Inner Light" and all other peculiarities of belief and conduct have arisen out of an interpretation or application of the same.

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Introduction

The organized religious movement which, in the 17th. century under the guidance and inspiration of George Fox, ultimately became known as Quakerism was in a large measure one arising from an emphasis upon a single idea, expressive of an experience, which became vital to the faith of many people. From the interpretations and implications of that idea many of the characteristics of Quakerism arose. We refer to the theory of "Inner Light." One of Quakerism's most outstanding historical scholars, commenting on the profusion of literary output which marked the early years of the movement, has stated:-

" Beneath every word which was written this idea of the Inner Light also lies written. It is the key to every peculiarity in Quakerism. "

Accepting this evaluation of the central place and determinative influence of the doctrine we may ask first of all why such an idea achieved this importance? We shall see that it was not a belief added to a confusing conglomerate of theological ideas, but was a conception which for its "first publishers", and thousands afterwards, simplified the organization of their thoughts about God, the world, life, and their inter-relations. They readily saw that the

connection of the individual with God, to be of significance to them, must be in the form of an understood relationship which was only possible because both participants partook of an essential likeness . We are influenced by God because we are of God, and the sign of that influence is in the potentialities of our spiritual lives: we are not intrinsically divine because we can exert a will which is truly human in that its source is never beyond us, but always there is an immanent possibility of reaching to the divine without. They appropriated the religious values of such a conception by the acceptance of the simpler idea that something of God dwelt in man.

Because of the subjective nature of both George Fox's religious experience and the idea which best explained it the movement which resulted was a mystical one. Yet the disintegrating, disturbing, unbalancing tendencies of mysticism, while not totally lacking among Quakers, have been remarkably absent.

Men and women seeking some clear revelation of God, and suffering from an uncertainty concerning external authorities, have often found indication of God's purpose and work in the operations and moods of their own inner lives.

Some mystics have created a state of inner exaltation; they have deepened, or at least made more prominent, this inner state by freeing the mind from any untoward thought, relieving it from any concrete problem, removing any mind content likely to impinge on the desired end. Their minds, thus subjectively conditioned, become their sole means of revelation. Such a type of mysticism has naturally produced unhealthy, unbalanced, attenuated religious life as can be seen in many of the typical medieval mystics. The resultant condition of a mind and body submitted to such a technique is not a condition of real religious fervour and exaltation, but an emotional condition bordering on hysteria. The inner life of man is not replete with those things necessary to its spiritual sustenance and activity. Man's spiritual nature reacts to outward influences; even as the life of nature is sustained by the conditions of its objective environment, so the life of the spirit is ministered to by external things. A life bereft of these is often a life stultified. It was at this point that George Fox made a contribution to the character of the mysticism of the group of which he had been the founder, and was afterwards such a force in maintaining. He did not confine his doctrine of the immanent divinity of man to a subjective spiritual life

that had no reference to the world of objective experience. He bore witness to the life within, but the "Inner Light" was exercised in an interpretation, understanding, and appreciation of the "things without." The world without, thus understood, became a support to the life within. Between subjective and objective a sane and healthy balance was struck which saved Quakerism then and later from any over-emphasis likely to produce abnormality.

Not only in the intellectual conceptions of the "Inner Light" do we see evidences of the mystical nature of Quakerism as a religious expression, but also in the character of the experience which it has produced. Much of the development of the doctrine of "Inner Light" cannot be clearly understood unless we have an understanding of the essential nature of mystical experience as a background.

(I)

James has given us what he terms the "four marks of mystical experience": these are:- 1. Ineffability, 2. Noetic quality, 3. Transiency, 4. Passivity. In Quaker experience the two latter characteristics have not been so general as the two former, but they have been in evidence and do account for some changes in viewpoint. It is necessary fully to enter into an appreciation of a subjective idea, that one have

I. William James: Varieties of Religious Experience; p.380.

something of the experiential state which accompanies it, and lacking such it is more or less difficult to understand its influence upon conduct. The necessity for a subjective interpretation of religious experience for those who have lost the value of external authority and religious symbols is increased. Such having lost the support and inspirational, emotional, and ideational force of external religious forms, symbolic exercises, and the concrete symbolic objects of religious usage, tend to transfer the normal force which these things generate to the subjective states of their religious experience, so that even the concomitant ideas become in some degree symbolic - often the individual is unaware that he makes a subconscious symbolic interpretation. The necessary experience provides the mystical background for such an easy transference of symbolic belief to normal understanding. The knowledge of the character of experience, with the ability to give an interpretation of its objective forms and define its subjective sources, has often proved to be an insufficient mental equipment for a deeper understanding of Quaker history and thought. For this something of intuitive genius is needed.

In the matter of his relationship with the Church the Quaker has proved the true mystical nature of his religious profession. The authority of the Church, as an institution

directing the life and thought of people, is to be discovered in many things; its traditional place in the social milieu has claimed man's regard; its inherited creeds and dogmas with the sanctity of antiquity give it an authoritative outlook; its claims to be the dispenser, because of an unique divine and historical relationship, of spiritual grace. The mystic does not recognize any of these claims to authority; his authorities are never objective, but always to be found in a personal sense of the divine. Out of this distinct difference of approach the opposition, often acute, between mysticism and organized historic forms arises. But man is a social animal; he does not find his true self in standing alone; he can best interpret himself from the standpoint of a whole, and that sense of unity with time and God which comes from adherence to an organized historic Church, the mystic secures by the development of an inner experience of spiritual exaltation which gives him a sense of fusion with something greater than himself. Others, because of environment, upbringing, experience-manifold, have become dependent on the external aids of religious cult, while the Quaker has discovered the value of inner resources and relationships.

The tendency in thinking is always in the direction of some view of the ultimate nature of reality that makes

possible the unity of the whole. Again and again this has been true, and to-day the same thought is emerging in the current scientific conception of matter as finally reducible to something immaterial. The conviction that there is something in the Universe which corresponds to a reality within goes a long way towards establishing a sense of harmony and conviction that the world is knowable and friendly. Such an idea is not only intellectual, it also has pragmatical value. For we can discover not only what God is, but the implications of that belief for conduct. So the doctrine of the "Inner Light" has this pragmatical validity for the conduct of life.

With this understanding of the close relationship between certain definite results of mystical thought and experience and Quakerism, we can the better proceed to an enquiry into the development of the "Inner Light" doctrine among Quakers. Because Fox was not an originator of the conception, although he did powerfully reinforce it as a living faith by the dynamic of his own personality, but received it, directly or otherwise, from the contemporary thought of his time, we have thought it best to commence with a brief study of the religious views on the Continent and in England which probably made some contribution to his thought, and certainly did to that of his followers.

So in the first chapter of the following pages an effort will be made to study the Continental groups in existence prior to the time of Fox, which were in themselves the main river of mystical religion out of which the Quaker stream eventually flowed, and which, unconsciously or otherwise, provided Fox with spiritual ideas which were incorporated in his formulation of the "Inner Light."

CHAPTER ONE

The ideas current on the Continent and in England prior to, and in the time of George Fox, which probably influenced his conceptions.

The nature of religion is largely determined by the geographic, political and physical conditions of a people; as life within a group may be progressive or retrogressive so the manifestations of religion within this same group may be the same. A spiritual genius is more often than not one who can combine the realities of existing religion with emphases upon new or needed aspects, and by the new combination of stresses create a religious system that can satisfy the needs and earnest desires of groups of people. Often such a leader will be the product of a mood or movement that has been in development for decades or even centuries; he is the culmination, rather than the cause, of the group he leads. In him distinctive, though perhaps latent, viewpoints are emphasized and with the addition of an outstanding personality the cause he represents receives a wonderful impetus. Such an one and such a movement cannot be fully understood apart from the historical background of which they are products.

This is very true in the case of the section of the Christian Church known as the Quakers and their distinctive doctrine of the "Inner Light." The basis

of the movement cannot be clearly apprehended by an analysis of George Fox and his contemporaries without an interpretation and appreciation of the movements that preceeded them, and which gave them form and were the indirect cause of their appearance. It has often been the fashion to regard George Fox as a spiritual genius, who, without any knowledge of the movements of his time, and by the sheer quality and intensity of his spiritual and moral endowments and struggles, created a new body of truth and gathered a "peculiar people" to himself. Nothing appears further from the truth. We now know that all the ideas and practises which characterized the Quakers in the time of Fox had been preached and accepted by large groups in England and on the Continent long before his appearance. It will subsequently appear in this study that the practises, discipline, viewpoints, and experiences of the early Quakers were the frequent results of movements that had been going on and spreading out for nearly three centuries before Fox commenced to preach. This is particularly true concerning the doctrine of the "Inner Light", which was a fundamental and integral belief of many groups on the Continent.

This period was not only one of preparation

for the appearance of the Quakers as an organized group, but it also moulded the religious life and thought of thousands of people in England and entered largely into determining the religious and social heritage of George Fox. What was unique in Fox and the Quakers was the systematic organization of these various ideas and practises, and their being made subordinate to the one central and dominating idea - the doctrine of the "Inner Light."

From the very primitive conceptions of religion, seen in animistic practises, to the more developed systems of our own day, religion is often an attempt at adaptation to the realities of life. Any change, therefore, in the social, moral, or religious environment will, in time perhaps, bring about a corresponding change in the expressions of religious opinion. Tendencies and moods of a time will, by their very force, mould and direct the religious expressions of that period. During the later Middle Ages the tendency towards subjective religious experience, and the attempt at the intelligent understanding of such experience, was evident. This tendency was reinforced by the distinctive trend towards a faith basis for religion; one evidence of this was to

be seen in the Reformation. Naturally, men fitted by the times in which they lived were thrown up into the prominence of leadership. These men, leaders in what they termed "spiritual religion", inaugurated a new era of spiritual perception on a large scale; a movement which, reinforced in the moral and spiritual passion of the Reformation, eventually blossomed and came to a ripe fruitage in Quakerism.

These men were, indeed, revolutionaries, not against any political domination, but against spiritual intolerance. Because of their own needs, and the failure of established religion to meet them, they challenged the religious systems of their day and found their power for so doing in the moral dynamic of mystical, but real, experience. To the fight these men brought an intense religious faith, which was only deepened by their experiences of antagonism and persecution. If at first the movement was hampered by a lack of coherency and organization, this was remedied in England by its organization into the Quakerism of the seventeenth century. The organization of the Quakers may have been due to the initiative of one man, but the seed sown in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries was already

bearing fruit in many groups. Fox made articulate for these people their own half-formulated viewpoint and gave a new impetus, purpose, and direction to their lives. To these scattered groups he brought an increased consciousness and by it bound them into a larger organization.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century Europe was in the Dark Ages in more than one sense. The Great Schism (1378 - 1417), with the spectacle of rival popes anathematizing each other and each claiming the spiritual overlordship of the Church, was not of the nature to inspire a people's faith, already undermined by an indifferent clergy, in the validity of the Church's ministrations and pretensions. But this schism was only another evidence of what had been happening in the Church for years. In South Bavaria, at the beginning of the century, when King Louis and his subjects were under the papal interdict of John xxii, the people had experienced the rapacity of the priests; taking advantage of the situation they had sold the spiritual blessings of the Church to any who had the price to pay. Added to the insincerity of the majority of the priesthood there was terrible poverty. This was the poverty which, a hundred years later, Scwenckfeld often called attention to and which led at the

beginning of the sixteenth century to the Peasants' revolts in Europe.

Men and women only find their religious hunger increased in times when their faith in an external infallible Church is shaken, and it was natural that in such days there sprang up in southern Germany small groups of men and women impelled by a common desire to secure an inward peace that would keep their lives stabilized in such insecure external circumstances. These groups were not independent of the churches; in fact they hoped to purify them and bring them back to an appreciation of spiritual religion. A modern analogy is to be seen in the Oxford Group movement and its loose connection with, but not separateness from the churches. Everywhere they kept the outward rules of the Church rigidly, but, on account of the way in which the authorities were easily stirred into persecuting them, they kept their meetings as secret as possible. The fear of the Inquisition was by no means dead. Soon this school of thought had its outstanding leaders and books. The most outstanding book of this period, and one of such spiritual worth that it has not only survived the ravages of time, but is still a much used spiritual

manual, was the *Theologia Germanica*. This book sprang out of the spiritual necessity of the times and filled a want caused by the paucity of such helps to "the practise of the presence of God." Its authorship is uncertain, but that it was written by a member of one of these mystical groups is evident from its general character and the preface to the Wurtzburg edition. With this book, published sermons by John Tauler and his master Eckhart, and the *Imitation of Christ*, the atmosphere became changed by the influence of a more personal and real religious experience. Everywhere the influence of these groups and their writings spread and produced similar phenomena. One writer⁽¹⁾ has described the beginning of this period as :-

"...the wonderful days of the mystical
Renaissance of the fourteenth century."

The step which these men took which warrants our study of them is not one which designates them as merely reformers and dissenters. It was a step of radical and fundamental importance, and one which separated them and their movements from the reformation and differentiated between their mode of thinking and that of the Reformers. The step was the one that led them from reliance upon

I. Claire Kirchberger: *The Dublin Review*: Oct. 1930.

outward authority, as that authority was seen in the Church, its ordinances and sacraments, to an appreciation and belief in a religion of internal dynamic and authority. It was a shifting of emphasis from the external Church to the inward personality. Man was enthroned because of his latent abilities and divine possibilities, and because he was believed to be the husk containing potential divine seed. The functions for developing this inner possibility were no longer to be absolutely those of the Church, but were to be personal. Here was the stressing of the doctrine of the "Inner Light." Eckhart himself, though believing that the divine nature is manifest in all things, yet regarded it as being manifested in a more potential sense in the soul of man. For him, as for St. Augustine, man's chief end is union with God. Whilst they practised asceticism (I) this was not their chief emphasis. One writer describes it thus:-

" It was inwardness, a life of simple faith, hope, and love derived from personal fellowship with God and flowing out in all the moral virtues. What they sought and found was a first hand spiritual experience. They believed in the living actual educative work of God in the soul."

Perhaps a deeper study of the historical situation would

reveal that, in spite of the apparent spontaneity of the birth of this spiritual movement, it owed very much to the spread of Waldensian influence. Tauler himself, by some presumed to be the author of the *Theologia Germanica*, attributed his zeal in this cause to Nicholas of Basle, a Waldensian, and Suso, also of the Waldensian fold, was a close friend of his.

These scattered groups of people invariably took the name "Friends of God" (*Gottesfreunde*) and their chief doctrines may be briefly described as follows:-

1. The renunciation of self and the surrender of the individual's will to the divine will.
2. The recognition of the abiding presence of God's spirit in all believers, and that it is ever seeking to work towards the consummation of its purpose for being there - the union of the human with the Divine.
3. The uselessness and worthlessness of all religion founded on fear and receiving its power from the hope of reward.
4. The equality of laymen and ministers in God's sight.

We can easily see that in these viewpoints there were ideas that later became fundamental to Quakerism, and in the second point the doctrine of the "Inner Light" is asserted without any doubt.

This movement went on gathering momentum during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries until it was

joined by the stream of new intellectualism that came with the Renaissance. The fifteenth century had been intellectually moribund and the spiritual movement we have been noticing was of a mystical and experiential kind. The mind of this time had not put the theories of the Church to the test of logic, but more to that of feeling and need. But with the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the flight of the scholars of the Near East to Italy, and especially to Florence, the European situation took on a new phase. Once more the poetry of Homer, the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, and the general culture of Greece began to influence men's thinking. Erasmus said of Colet, the Greek scholar at Oxford in this period, "it seems like listening to Plato himself." From this time we must date the awakening to a rational approach to the problems of religion in England and Germany. To this time belongs More's "Utopia", which was, indeed, a premature prophecy of the reign of social justice, religious liberty, and tolerance.

With the mystical mood and the desire for spiritual religion joined to this movement of "New Learning" an atmosphere and situation were created in

which Luther found a sympathetic reaction to his fight against the pretensions of the Roman Church. It was this condition of spiritual need, rather than the intelligent rejection of the viewpoints of the Church, which supplied the moral power of the Reformation. One (I) student of the history of this time states:-

" It would be a mistake to find the principles of the Reformation in the rejection of the Pope or of transubstantiation, or even in appeal from Church authority and Scripture. All these are only inferences; the principle behind them is that the knowledge of God is direct and personal. Any man may help us with example and spiritual counsel, and the priest may minister to us the services of the Church, but in the end we must know for ourselves. But this principle may be embodied in many forms. Mysticism is almost independent of history, and not even specifically Christian. But movements are commonly shaped by historical circumstances, as monasticism by the asceticism of the Middle Ages, the Reformation by the reaction to it."

But the movement for inward reality and experience was away from the central stream of the Reformation, and it was thus away because leaders like Luther, having won freedom from the intolerance of the Roman Church, became themselves spiritual bigots, and in their attitude towards others showed the lack of tolerance which in others they had despised. Luther was not of the spirit of the leaders of the "New Learning", and although friendly with many

of the Humanists was not stirred by a passion for applying intellectual freedom and liberty to matters of faith and order. A study of the subject reveals that the early leaders of the "spiritual reformation" were nearly all men of culture and fine deep educational background. Many of them studied at Universities which were centres of Humanistic teaching and influence. Luther was anxious to substitute one ecclesiastical system for another, and a system which was not unlike the old in some respects. Often in such a system the individual and personal needs of adherents are forgotten; the great and central thing is the right of the institution over the individual in matters of religious concern. Within any ecclesiastical system that hopes to meet the needs of the people in changing times and circumstances there must be liberty to make, and provision for, adjustments for one's own religious and personal needs. This need was not appreciated by the Reformers, and so those of mystic tendencies sought religious satisfaction outside the main Reformation movement. The freedom of the individual to form a personal judgment of the spiritual worth of an idea was one of the rights originally claimed by the Reformers. They had claimed it in connection with questions concerning the Roman Church, but with their

gathering strength repudiated its application to a judgment of their own positions. These men lacked true liberality of attitude and spirit. Luther had appeared to many to be the prophet for whom the religious world had been waiting. Gradually, however, his conservative spirit began to mitigate his first enthusiasm. With this change he became less of an enthusiast and more of a spiritual autocrat, and thus lost much of his influence as a spiritual leader and assumed the role of a driving religious genius.

All during the years the movement that had begun with the "Theologia Germanica" and the "Gottesfreunde" had been spreading out, and in various countries, in fact all European ones, conditions were ripe for its easy propagation and acceptance. But most of these movements gathered themselves around men of moral and spiritual dynamic who, by their heroism and gifts of leadership, kept them from being lost in the greater movement of the Reformation. At the beginning of the sixteenth century there was a large group of such outstanding leaders travelling in various parts of Europe teaching, exhorting, and helping the groups sympathetic to their particular interpretations of the message of mysticism. It is proposed to briefly notice some of these leaders and the emphasis which they placed upon the inner nature of

divine revelation and the presence of God in the heart of the believer. We must remember, however, that this whole movement, which had so many phases in different places, was not a product of the Reformation, but had roots stretching back into the mysticism, economic pressure, and exploitation of pre-Reformation times; the movement, however, received a great impetus from the spiritual power and purpose liberated by the Reformation. The lives and influence of many of these men have been dealt with very thoroughly elsewhere, ^(I) but we must notice certain contributions which they made to the atmosphere and thought of their times which later spread over into England.

One of the foremost of these leaders was Caspar Scwenckfeld, a Silesian nobleman, who was born at Ossig in Silesia in 1490. He was a man of cultured tastes and habits, having been educated at Cologne and other universities. For a time he assumed his rightful place as a nobleman at the court of the Duke of Münsterberg. He was a supporter of the Reformation for a brief period, but the works of Tauler, with a deeper study of the Scriptures, led to a change of viewpoint and conviction,

I. Certain parts of this chapter owe much to the works of Rufus M. Jones, and in particular his "Spiritual Reformers in the 16th. and 17th. Centuries."

and in 1521 he retired to private life. As a result of a conversation with Luther in Wittenberg in 1525 his severance from the Reformation movement became complete. He recognized that on matters like Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Confessions of Faith, etc., there was a complete divergence of viewpoint between himself and the reformer. Luther placed great faith in the power of a reformation in organization and objective expressions of faith, while Scwenckfeld believed that fundamentally any lasting reformation must be from within outwardly, not from without inwardly. For him the whole process of personal reformation, of salvation, is in the field of actual personal experience. It is the result of faith, not in an objective organization arrogating to itself power to dispense, through its organization, creeds, and sacraments, salvation to the individual member, but, in the application of religious truths directly to the individual. When the believer exercises his faith in the central truths of Christianity then there is granted to him, (it is almost automatic in its action) a new and higher, and, in reality, divine power. For Scwenckfeld the great truth about man is that while his soul is not essentially divine it is so potentially. This potentiality

inherent in every man's soul is created an actuality by the step of faith in which the individual brings God into his inner life. This presence of God brings about a complete transformation and the process of salvation is complete. This manifestation within is, for Scwenckfeld, the "inner word." The "word" by which man is aroused to a knowledge of his own possibilities, and that leads to the step of faith, is that of Scripture, is the "outer word." The "inner word" can harmonize the "outer word." The "inner word" is the continued manifestation, in the world of the spirit, of the Christ. In one of his letters Scwenckfeld wrote:- (I)

" Christ is of course the true light, which
lighteth every believing man.....
He (the Spirit) will harmonize beautifully all
passages (of Scripture) to the glory of God;
for this inward task the flesh has no capacity."

Even this quotation, apart from the very many supporting ones, shows us clearly that he believed an inner divine light bestowed on all men was absolutely distinct from the human reason, and by it man was definitely linked up to Christ and God.

The teaching of Scwenckfeld was akin to that of Fox, who consciously or unconsciously, we may regard as his disciple.

As he travelled Scwenckfeld organized little groups of sympathizers. These groups met in private houses and adopted the quiet meeting, waiting for the spirit to inspire them. They passed the epistles of Scwenckfeld from one group to another. When they were eventually discovered ruthless attempts to stamp them out were made. Many of their leaders fled, but a vital and dynamic contribution had been made to the religious mood of the time and the personality of Caspar Scwenckfeld still marched on in the hearts of many who not only assumed his name, but lived in his spirit.

Another leader who had a formative influence at this time was Hans Denck. Little in the matter of biographical detail is known of this true "son of God." He was born in 1495 and died, aged 32 years, in Basle in 1527. Because of his religious opinions he was persecuted and pursued from town to town. He tried very hard during the great Anabaptist Synod of Augsburg to influence the movement into more definite mystical channels. Denck's convictions were very much akin to those of Scwenckfeld. At Nuremberg in 1524 he had made a statement before the city council in which he had said, in effect, that, although a full experience of the "inward word" of God's

presence in his soul he had not had, nevertheless, he had felt the presence of a divine spark which acted as an inner witness of God. This divine presence cancelled external ceremonies as aids to a knowledge of God, and without it even the Bible was useless. He was convinced that there was a witness of God in the spirit of every man. This inward witness he names the "inward word." The realization of this inner witness is essential before (I) men can find God, for it is of God. He says:-

" Apart from God, no one can either seek or find God, for he who seeks God already in truth has him."

This brief view of Denck gives us a picture of a man imbued with the spirit and viewpoints of what we might term a pre-Fox Quaker.

Four years after the birth of Denck, in the year 1499, there was born, at Donauwörth in Schwabia, a boy who was destined also to take a place of honour and influence among the ranks of those trying to give religion inner reality and outward expression. This was Sebastian Franck. After he had finished his education he was ordained a priest, but later on joined the Reformed Church. But when his great work, entitled "A Universal Chronicle of the World's History from the Earliest Times to the Present", was published in Strasbourg the storm broke

and henceforth this saint was forced to support himself and his family by following the trade of a soap-boiler. Here again is a spiritual genius attributing his convictions, in part, to the influence of Scwenckfeld. Franck, like many others before his time and since, was faced with the problem of discovering an unchanging principle of authority by which he could live. The very history of the outward Church was opposite to its claims to fulfill these needs of the human soul. For Franck the external Church ceased to exist as a reality;"for the inward enlightenment by the Spirit of God is sufficient."⁽¹⁾ Although he had possessed an admiration for the Church of the Reformation this he lost in the journey his soul took in its progressive realization of divine truth.⁽²⁾ He writes:-

" We must unlearn all that we have learned from our youth up from the papists, and we must change everything we have got from the Pope or from Luther and Zwingli."

The believer will always be on the alert to notice what God says in his heart. God has a witness in the hearts of those believing in him, and for those trying to live the best of spiritual lives it is well never to act or think against this witness. It was in this "inner light"

that Franck found his unvarying principle by which to live. This was the reality, which for him had become the acid test for all things. This reality is the thing which gives unique character to the Scriptures because they are the products of its work in the hearts of men. His writings are to be accepted only in so far as they can be harmonized with this "Word of God, Christ the
(I)
inward Life and Light of men." He writes:-

" This inward Light is nothing else than the
Word of God, God himself, by whom all things
were made, and by whom all men are enlightened."

In addition to the movements inaugurated or supported by the afore- mentioned men, there was a movement running parallel to them and extended all over Europe which in many places provided an atmosphere for their work or profited by it. This was the movement known as Anabaptism. The whole question of the origin and exact position of Anabaptism is a very complicated one, and no longer can we view it as the liberal side of the Reformation. There are several facts of which students of history can be certain. It is known that many wise and intelligent men were among its leaders and that it spread rapidly over the Continent and passed to England. As we have already noticed Hans Denck took a leading part among them.

The movement appears to have coincided with the social unrest, and within it anarchism found vent for stored up passion against the existing social order. They, the Anabaptists, can be traced back and found to have had contacts with the "Gottesfreunde." All through the years of the fifteenth century the movement was adding thousands of adherents to its ranks, and the attempt to set up a new social order in Munster in 1532, which was such a tragic failure in 1535, was only another symptom of the terrible conditions that the peasants had been reduced to by the closing of the woods and common lands, and in the increase of both civil and religious taxes, and which in 1525 had led to the outbreak of the Peasants' War in Germany. The taking of Munster as a centre for their social experiment by the Anabaptists had been prefaced by several years during which they had suffered much persecution, and which not only added zeal to their movement but, for the time being, altered some of their distinctive views.

After the fall of Munster in 1535 there was a leader by the name of Menno Simons. He gathered the remnants together and travelled from group to group giving them much counsel and advice. He, by his influence, introduced

once more some of the views, with added new ones, which had been held before the movement had come under the leadership of men like Melchior Hoffman, Jan Matthys, Jan Bockelson, and others. Menno believed that no Christian should swear or carry arms; that in civil affairs and in issues not contrary to Scripture the magistrates should be obeyed; that the Christian should not be one seeking revenge. No salaries were, according to Menno, to be paid to ministers, and silent prayer in worship was practised. But among these Anabaptists, who were thus reorganized and reimbued with spirit by the work and teaching of Menno Simons, a serious difference of opinion developed in 1555 which eventually led to schism in which one section became known as the New Congregation. This group had Joris Meins and Hendrick Naaldman as leaders. It was this group which later on became the distinctive sect known as the Mennonites.

(I)

They accepted the following six items as a Church programme:-

1. There can be no marriage in case one partner to the proposed transaction is under the sentence of the ban and avoidance. Even in case of adultery being committed by one partner of a marriage, neither the guilty nor innocent partner of that marriage can be married again.

2. Christ took his human nature from Heaven.

I. Henry E. Dosker: The Dutch Anabaptists: pp.127-8.

3. No Christian may bear the sword.
4. No Christian may seek justice in the civil courts.
5. Christ died only for Adam's, i.e. for original sin, not for our later sins.
6. Since his resurrection Christ has reigned on the earth, with his own people, and will do so until he delivers his kingdom to his Father.

It can readily be seen that wherever the influence of later Anabaptism spread it would help to create a tendency to a religion of a more spiritual and subjective type than that to be found within the established Churches.

During the Anabaptist persecution there was born in Amsterdam a boy who became one of the early group of Dutch exponents and practisers of mystical religion - this was Dirck Coornhert. There can be little doubt that Coornhert was greatly influenced by the writings and teachings of Franck. He often mentions the latter in his writings and uses his views in support of his own. That Coornhert was a man of ability is unquestioned; he was made secretary to the States-General in 1572 by William of Orange, and we have evidence that William not only regarded his character with approval, but also showed his faith in him by placing heavy responsibilities upon him.

Coornhert set himself the task of defending those who, because of conscience, found it impossible to conform to the established Church. He claimed that each individual should have the right to live undisturbed as a member of the invisible Church. He believed that God was planning to send new apostles who would reform the churches and gather all the believers into a united Church of Christ. For the interim between the old and the new times Coornhert wanted an organization which would live only by what was already taught in Scripture. But he by no means claimed that this proposed interim Church would be a perfect and fully developed one. It was only a poor shadow of what the true apostolic Church would be like. Because the adherents of this movement were supposed to be waiting for, or seeking, a new Church they were either known as "Waiters" or "Seekers." The whole movement found, however, embodiment in what were known as the "Collegiants." Like the Mennonites they accepted the Sermon on the Mount as their ethical standard and applied it with rigour. Their life was simple in nature and effect. Many of the peculiarities of dress, speech, manner, and social etiquette, which were later on adopted by the Quakers, were in vogue among these people years before George Fox began to preach. Their meetings

for worship were of a silent nature to a large extent to give the individual worshipper an opportunity to develop an "opening."

A very brief synopsis of Coornhert's position will help us once again to gain an appreciation of the nature of the religious truth these men were seeking. Coornhert did not despise human reason, like some of the mystics have done, but believed that through its exercise man could become acquainted with the "word of God." Scripture was not this "word of God", but was a product of the eternal "word" which is revealed in the human heart. Scripture was given only as an external and temporary guide to man so that by its help man at last might realize his possession of the Light of the "Inner Christ" in his own heart. The "word" of God was a living word and very different from the external word, Scripture. The outward word was only of use so long as it reflected and guided the "inner word," It is here that we get echoes of the doctrines of Swenckfeld. The fact that man has this inner word seeking to find expression in the human life creates a perpetual dissatisfaction in the heart of the individual who has not discovered its presence and brought about a reconciliation between it and

himself. When at last he realizes the presence of the "Light" within and begins to act by it, then the road to God is made plain. His acceptance of the presence and authority of the "Light" within is a step which finds its justification in the deeper spiritual experiences which it inaugurates in the inner life. It is a progressive revelation; there is nothing static about this inner condition. This is all true because the "Light" is the reality he is seeking. Coornhert would claim his faith to be pragmatic; it justified itself in the experience of the individual.

Before going on to discuss the later European influence of Boehme, it will be well at this point to stop and notice the condition of England during the sixteenth century, and mark the way in which the impression of Continental mysticism or spiritual religion was made in the island kingdom.

At the beginning of the century the Renaissance had begun to be felt among the scholastic circles, and the New Learning was a reality in England. More's "Utopia" appeared in 1516 as an indication of the hopes of better days which smouldered in men's hearts. Henry VIII had ascended the throne in 1509 with the well wishes and

support of the new school of Humanists who looked to him to become a leader in reform. But with his resolve to seek a divorce from Catherine in 1527 began in earnest the battle, which was fought on three fronts between the monarch and Parliament, the Pope and the Church, and the nobility and the people. The year 1531 saw the king proclaimed as "Supreme Head of the Church of England" and the processes begun by which, in time, England became a thoroughly Protestant nation. In 1536 the English Bible was issued and the dissolution of the smaller monasteries begun - the nation was at the height of its reaction to the Roman Church. King Edward VI carried on the work of making England Protestant, only to have the work undone by Mary, who became queen in the year 1553. The Protestants who had suffered persecution under Wolsey were again made to suffer under Mary. With the advent of Elizabeth to the throne in 1559 the royal supremacy in ecclesiastical matters was restored, and when she died in 1603 England was at heart truly Protestant. But this century in England's history had deeper and more fundamental matters, than monarchical designs and plots, in its experience. Wars with France and Spain constantly made such drains on the

national wealth that the people were reduced in many cases to abject poverty. Here, as in Germany and the countries of Continental Europe, the situation was ripe for a revolt against the assumptions of the Church. The ordinary people saw the matter of the divine sovereignty of the Church bandied between Kings and Popes. The Church which should have been able to give peace and tranquillity and assure the individual of the efficacy of its sacraments was itself the centre of a storm which prevailed all over Europe. Henry VIII could only have taken the momentous step he did because he had the popular forces of the day behind him in some degree. The teaching of the Christian Humanists had not been in vain, and Lutheran ideas had been seeping into men's minds. The people had, in many cases, a rooted dislike of the clergy. For many of the clergy the Church provided an easy living because it did not demand high standards of culture and behaviour. It was reported⁽¹⁾ that in 1551 when Bishop Hooper of Gloucester held a visitation in his diocese of the clergy he discovered that great ignorance prevailed among them. We are told that 311 clergymen were examined; of these 171 were unable

I. Lindsay: A History of the Reformation: Vol.ii p.353.

to repeat the Ten Commandments, 10 were unable to repeat the Lord's Prayer, and 30 could not tell where it was to be found in the Bible. More outstanding evidences of the mental apathy and ignorance of the clergy of this time could be adduced.

But at the beginning of the century, and during Elizabeth's reign, England, because of the sympathy of large groups of her people, offered a sanctuary to thousands of refugees from the Continent, who fled to England because of religious oppression. Many of the Anabaptists were craftsmen and in England they found their welcome made more attractive by the opportunities offered for the continuance of their crafts. In 1528, just after the persecution started in Germany, great numbers of these people entered England. Their strongholds became London, Norwich, Dover, Canterbury, etc. We know that on the day after the Anabaptist attempt to take Amsterdam had failed, two ships full of religious refugees sailed for England; this was in 1535. It was, incidentally, because of the opprobrium that attached itself to the name Anabaptist as a result of the many failures, with their attendant vices, to establish "New Jerusalems" that the new elements in the ranks of

of the movement changed the name to that of Baptist. The persecutions of the sixteenth century tended to concentrate the adherents of spiritual religion in Poland, Northern Germany, and the Low Countries, but when the oppression in these places became too great there were movements to England. In England they often allied themselves to the Nonconformists. In the year 1546 several refugees from Antwerp came to London, and here Catherine Parr, the wife of Henry VIII, was very kind to them. In the same year Cranmer handed over to a group of refugees the church in London which had belonged to the Augustinian convent. This church soon grew so large that it needed four pastors, who worked under the leadership of John a Lasco. By the year 1553 it had no less a membership than 4,000. The migration increased to such proportions that by 1550 immigrants from the Netherlands were arriving in England by the shipload. Most of these people were Anabaptists, and though they were not legally recognized as such in England they were not troubled so long as they remained in insignificance. But these people did not keep their viewpoints to themselves -an impossible task. In the year 1539 a law of Henry VIII had provided:-

" That those who are in any error, as
Sacramentarians, Anabaptists, or any others

" that sell books, having such opinions in them, being once known, both the books and such persons shall be detected etc....."

It must be remembered that the knowledge of the general public was limited concerning the opinions that separated and made distinct the various spiritual groups. The name Anabaptist was applied indiscriminately to many groups. Very few of these refugees ever left England and remaining were absorbed by the native English population. The impression of their viewpoint on the English religious mind was of great importance, and contributed in a small measure to the way in which Non-conformity as a movement developed.

Often the refugees did not learn any lessons from their exile and carried over a spirit of intolerance. One example will suffice. In London there was established by refugees from Holland a Dutch Reformed Church. This was made possible by the tolerance which characterized the reign of Edward VI. This church was exiled during the reign of Mary, but was restored in the reign of Elizabeth. It had during the later period of its existence attained great prosperity, but such a simple - simple to us - question as that of the procedure to be followed in presenting a baby for baptism rent the

church into two sections. A pastor of the church in Embden was called in to arbitrate, but after spending six months trying to bring about a reconciliation returned home having failed.

The influx of immigrants into England continued until by 1573 it was estimated that there were no less than 50,000 in England. Sometimes the authorities visited the congregations of such people with punishment, for in the year 1575 Queen Elizabeth burned John Wielmacker and Hendrick Ter Woort, two members of a congregation of Dutch Anabaptists which gathered for worship in a house in Aldersgate. It is probable that because of this persecution many of them joined the Church of England during the reign of Elizabeth. It is significant that many of the Roundheads of Cromwell were recruited from the districts where the Anabaptists and others of the religious refugees from the Continent had settled.

That the Anabaptists were not the only ones seeking the shelter that England afforded at this time is certain. The "Family of Love" or, as they were better known, the Familists, came into notice at this time. In 1551 an English writer, Wylliam Turner, wrote a book, the purpose

of which was stated to be " a preservative and treacle against the poyson of Pelagius." The author mentions not only Anabaptists but also "Swengfeldianes." So deeply had the peculiar views of some of these sects sunk into the English mind that when Henry Barrow joined the Separatists in 1586 he declared he was against Universities as training centres for ministers. He called attention to the heathen derivation of the names of months and days, and proposed that Christian men should call them by number and should say "1st day of the 1st month" etc. Even as in prehistoric ages England was joined to the Continent of Europe, as the geologists inform us, by a land bridge which is now submerged in the English Channel and the North Sea, so surely were the religious ideas of England, at this time, connected to those of the European movements. It is the task of the historian to search out the connections which are now submerged by the historical mists of time. The mysticism of English Quakerism is directly connected with similar forces that in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries swept over Europe.

During the year in which the two Anabaptists, already mentioned, were burned by Elizabeth in England

Jacob Boehme was born. Boehme embodied in his life and teachings all the best that had been realized by former exponents of the mystical way. He became an indirect link between the movements of earlier periods and the beginning of the Quakerism of the seventeenth century. He was born in November 1575 at Alt Seidenberg, a little market town not far from Gorlitz, Germany. His parents were peasants possessed of simple piety, and Jacob grew up to be a shoemaker in Gorlitz.

Like most of the religious leaders of his time Boehme was influenced by the teaching of Luther. Although he owed to Luther in the first place his own realization of the necessity of personal faith, and his recognition of the range of evil, perhaps it was the harshness of emphasis by Luther which drove him to the kinder and more gentle teaching and influence of the earlier spiritual reformers. That he was more fitted for the latter influences by his psychical equipment cannot be doubted. He was possessed of a vivid imagination, and often gave it free rein in the periods of meditation which he sought. He was liable to emotional disturbances and was very sensitive to objective stimuli. He had an experience very similar to that of George Fox, when he records that

he was "enrapt with the Divine Light for the space of seven days and stood possessed of the highest beatific wisdom of God, in the ecstatic joy of the Kingdom." This experience was as foundational for Boehme as the experience St. Paul had on the road to Damascus - it was a turning point in his life.

This sensitive soul of Boehme cried out for spiritual reality; he who saw meanings in flowers, trees, and all life, was not to find spiritual satisfaction in the "dead letter of the law." Formal and external religion was, for him, dead. Its resurrection was only possible when its adherents came to a knowledge and experience of the reality of their own inner witness. Naturally enough his ideas concerning salvation were in line with those of his spiritual forefathers; men like Denck, Franck, Scwenckfeld, and others. In fact, in many ways, Boehme's religious life had elements akin to the experiences and viewpoints of many of the spiritual reformers. He sees that man's soul can react to either goodness or evil, to darkness or light, to high ideals or low standards. But the centre of man's spirit is of the divine nature and is possessed of the capacity to react to the divine without. Conflict is created in the self by the contrary desires which seek to

follow the spiritual will and the physical will at the same time. But when the heart opens itself fully to the divine influences inherent in its own nature and allows the Love and Light of God to enter then is the salvation of the individual accomplished. Boehme describes (I) his own experience thus:-

" Now while I was wrestling and battling, being aided by God, a wonderful light arose within my soul. It was a light entirely foreign to my unruly nature, but in it I recognized the true nature of God and man, and the relation existing between them, a thing heretofore I had never understood. "

When Boehme, the prophet of God, died in November, 1624 George Fox was four months old, having been born in July, 1624 at Drayton-in-the-Clay, Leicestershire, England. Boehme became the chronological connection between the Continental age of spiritual mysticism and the age of the new mysticism in England that blossomed out as a result of the work of Fox. We shall see, however, that Boehme was a strong link in the chain that tied England up to the religious movements of the Continent. It will be evident as we proceed to analyse the influences of the time of Fox, that Boehme's was by no means the least.

With the opening of the seventeenth century in

I. Von Hartmann: Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme: p.50.

England the inauguration of the Stuart period, with the ascent of James I to the throne, took place. The whole century was one of political and religious turmoil. It witnessed the difficulties of Parliament with the monarchy, the battles of the Long and Short Parliaments, the emigration of many Puritans to America, Civil War, execution of Charles I, the Protectorate, the Restoration, the persecution of the Non-conformists, etc. The Commonwealth period itself was the natural culmination and sequence of the spirit of the Reformation. Men and women were ready to question the right of vested authority to usurp the rights of individuals in matters both civil and religious. But in religious matters the spirit of the Reformation had had a poor start in England. The establishment of a national Church, with the King as its supreme head and defender, had not arisen as the direct result of the moral and religious convictions of a priest, backed by the multitudes, but as the result of a monarch's moral lapses and the inability, or unwillingness, of the Roman Church to provide an easy way out for his dilemma. The physical attractiveness, to the King, of Anne Boleyn must ever be regarded as one of the major causes for the establishment of the Church of England by Henry: that it

would have come later if Henry had not taken the initial step cannot be doubted. Because the Reformation in England was in its inception but a change over from papal to royal authority it lacked the moral dynamic of the Continental movement. On the Continent men's minds and hearts had been alert; they had been questioning themselves concerning divine truth, and from this condition it became possible for the moral incentives of the Reformation to spread. Quakerism arose in the last years of the first half-century when Fox began to preach in 1647. He met with an immediate response because the Church had failed to realize the spiritual needs of the people. A Church that lacks an adequate conception of its meaning and purpose in the world often finds an outlet for its natural energies in an emphasis upon forms and creeds. The Church of this time was busily engaged in disputations concerning both these things, and in the realm of doctrine was holding the position of a modern fundamentalist in claiming the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and the belief in the doctrine of original sin. The reading of the Authorized Version of the Bible (published in 1611) by many people, who had long been deprived and denied an opportunity to study it, only added large numbers to those

who were already asking questions concerning the meaning of religion and the purposes of the Church. The needs of the people and the new conceptions that were spread abroad only acted as incentives to the movement, which though unorganized was virile, that sought to find a scheme of thinking that would satisfy, not only the intellect, but also the heart. In many people's lives there was a vast chasm between what they felt within and what they saw without concerning the Church. Fox developed a system that harmonized a viewpoint of the Church with the idea of a spiritual presence within the heart of the believer. The doctrine of the "Inner Light" became a principle to be applied to everything.

We know that in the days of the seventeenth century religion was a vital interest to the majority of the people. There were not the things calculated to distract the intellectual attention like there are in our own days. The sermons preached on Sundays in the time of Fox were topics for lively debate and discussion throughout the following week. All this, however, does not account for the condition that made possible the building of a new movement like Quakerism, which gathered together before the end of the seventeenth century no less than 60,000

into an organized Church, and weaned them from religious customs and thoughts which had been consecrated by centuries of use. Tradition is one of the strongest authorities operating to mould the habits and lives of people, and often movements like Quakerism, which was an absolute break with tradition, become incredible to us because we are not fully aware of the conditions within the historical situation which made their inauguration possible. The fact is that ~~and~~ during the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries English exiles on the Continent and refugees in England had been providing an avenue for the infiltration of Continental spiritual and mystical forces into England. English mysticism was not created by Continental mysticism, but what was already latent and dormant in the English situation was aroused to life and new effort by the contact with the moral and spiritual fervour and passion of the Continental mystics. That this influence was made up of widely differing components was to be seen in the varying forms it took in the sects which arose in England in this period. (I)

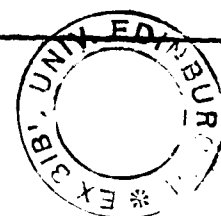
Something of this situation has been revealed by an author who has studied the life and work of many of these sects

I. Robert Barclay: The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth.

in the Commonwealth period.

We have already given time to the movement on the Continent, and we can now notice evidence in England of the influence it had upon the organization of similar movements.

During the Thirty-Years War many adherents of the spiritual sects, particularly followers of Scwenckfeld, fled to England. In 1645 there was published in England, by a man named Edwards, a book entitled "Gangroena." In this book the author gave a catalogue of what he called 176 errors, heresies, and blasphemies. This book alone provides evidence that in 1645, two years before Fox began to preach, many of the ideas presumed to have been the offspring of Fox's endeavours were held by many people. The same year that Edwards' book first saw the light witnessed also the publication of a book entitled "Dissuasive from the Errors of the Times etc." This was written by Robert Baylie who was ^a commissioner of the Church of Scotland at the Westminster Assembly. In speaking of the Independents who had crossed the Atlantic to settle in America he says that they held the heresy of "...avowing openly the personal inhabitation of the Spirit in all the godly, and his immediate revelation without the word, and these as infallible as scripture itself." (1)



The influence of this mood was upon the clergy as well as upon the laity, for in 1646 Henry Denne entered the lists on the side of the religion of the inner life. Denne had been ordained to the ministry in the year 1630, but finding its ranks abounding in men of vices, the very antithesis of what he and others expected of them, he left its ranks after denouncing the rottenness in it. Two years before the public ministry of Fox commenced he gave evidence of his faith in a tract he published with the title "The Dragnet of the Kingdom of Heaven, or, Christ drawing all men." One excerpt will illustrate his conception of the nature of the inner divinity. He said:- (I)

" Now God is light, and God is a spirit. If then
Christ lighteth everyman, God lighteth everyman.
The spirit lights everyman that cometh into the world."

Denne joined the General Baptists and became a very powerful preacher in their assemblies. It is worth noticing here that it was among a congregation of Baptists at Manfield that Fox found spiritual support in 1648. It was from this very congregation that the nucleus of the first Quaker group was formed.

So great was the diversity of sects, and so sudden their appearance in some places, that Ephraim Pagit, the author of a tract published in the year 1645 entitled

I. Barclay, Robert. The Inner Life, etc. p.163.

"Heresiographie" speaks of their sudden descent on London and mentions the following names of sects, among others, Familists, Anabaptists, Independents, Sabbatarians, Traskites, etc. It must not be thought that because Fox was an uneducated man ~~that~~ the movement he so finely led and wisely directed was one born in the ignorance of a dark age. Many fine and well educated men prepared the ground by their own writings on the subject of spiritual and inner religion, and also their translations of many of the works of earlier Continental leaders. Rufus M. Jones has given the world of scholarship an insight into
(I)
the work of many of these men.

One of the most interesting of these leaders was Francis Rous, born in Cornwall in 1579. After studying at Oxford he went to study at the University of Leyden in 1599. He was only twenty years of age at the time and it is possible that in Leyden he received the marked inclination towards the study of religion which characterized his later life. He embarked upon a legal career by entering the Middle Temple, London, in 1601, but very soon afterwards left and went and settled in Cornwall. That he was a man of ability may be presumed from the fact

In this connection see again Rufus M. Jones:
Spiritual Reformers etc: Chap. on
"Early English Interpreters."

that he was a member of Cromwell's "Barebones Parliament" and also a member of his Council of State. A few extracts from his writings will indicate his conception of the nature of inward reality. He wrote:-
(1)

" The soul has two eyes - one human reason, the other far excellling that, a divine and spiritual light. By it the soul doth see spiritual things as truly as the corporal eye doth corporal things"

and again he says:-

" Soul and light became knit together into one."

Like many who preceeded him Rous often talks of "Seed" and "Word" as applied to the divine in man. At times he views this "Seed" as an original part of man, and then again as something entering into and changing man, for
(2)
he says it is as if:-

" Christ entering into our spirits lays in them an immortal seed."

Another book of this period which had a part in shaping the patterns of mystical thinking was one by Doctor John Everard, of Cambridge. Other than that he was born about the same time as Boehme, we know very little of the early details of his life. This book was one of a collection of his sermons entitled "Gospel Treasures Opened." In an unpublished manuscript, which is still preserved at Cambridge University, we get an insight into the source of Everard's deep convictions regarding the

1. Jones, R.M. Spiritual Reformers, etc. p.268.

2. ibid p.269.

nature of religion and truth. This book is, in truth, a translation of Franck's book "Of the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil." Everything, for Everard, in the religious realm has its basis in the spiritual reality within man. Here was, once more, a man who harmonized and unified his religious beliefs on the basis of a belief in a God who revealed himself in every human heart.

One of the strongest influences, however, was that of the works and message of Boehme. At the beginning of the century there were many adherents of the school of thought traceable to this thinker's influence in England. The work of translating and bringing before the English public the works of Boehme fell to the hands of two brothers; Justice Durant Hotham of London, and the Rev. Charles Hotham, Rector of Wigan. The first appearance in England of publications of Boehme's works was in 1645 when a small volume was published with the title "Two Theosophical Epistles, Englished." A year later an address, delivered in Latin at Cambridge, by Charles Hotham, was translated and published in English by Durant Hotham. The high water mark of Justice Hotham's reverence for, and devotion to, Boehme came in the year 1653 with the issue of a life of the German mystic. The works of these two

brothers bear all the marks of the great influence Boehme was having upon the thinkers of this time, and although Fox does not mention his name or the sect which had adopted his teaching; he was indelibly impressed
(1)
by his teaching. Robert Barclay has shown clearly from a comparison of passages taken from both the Journal of Fox and the writings of Boehme how much the former profited by the latter. The likenesses of passages in the former are so akin to some in the latter, both in form and thought, as to suggest a relationship far deeper than anything to be explained as merely coincidental. That there were groups of followers of Boehme in England, which were akin to the Quaker groups, is attested by Richard Baxter. He
(2)
said of them:-

" The fifth sect are the Behmenists, whose opinions go much toward the way of the former (Quakers) for the sufficiency of the Light of Nature, Inward Light, the salvation of the Heathen as well as Christians, and a dependence on 'revelations.' But they are fewer in number and seem to have attained a greater meekness and conquest of passions than any of the rest. Their doctrines are to be seen in Jacob Behmen's books, by him that hath nothing else to do than to bestow a great deal of time to understand him that was not willing to be easily understood."

It is very probable that Justice Durant Notham was a personal friend of Fox and the man of whom Fox wrote that he was

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1. Robert Barclay: The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth; p.214
2. R.M.Jones: Spiritual Reformers etc: p.227

a gentle spirit that had had experience of the way God worked in the heart of the believer, and who, when Fox spoke to him concerning the doctrine of the "Inner Light", replied that he had known the doctrine for ten years and was glad the Lord was going to have it made known to the people. Hotham's conception of the inner nature of religion is well evidenced in one of his passages where he writes:- (I)

" God hath sent this generation a plain uncouth Message, bidding man to fight, telling him that he shall have a Heaven, a Paradise, a Joy, a Land, a Territory, a Kingship, but that all this is in himself, the land to be won is himself."

Another translator and interpreter of Boehme was one John Sparrow. He, with the help of a relative named John Ellistone, translated very many of Boehme's works into English in the year 1661. Sparrow was born in 1615 and was very early in his life impressed by the main ideas of Boehme.

Although it cannot be definitely proved that George Fox derived his central ideas from Boehme, it seems to be true that he fashioned them from the current ideas of his day. Boehme's books were widely read, sold, and eagerly studied. The Seekers of this period made a great use of his books. To the surge of spiritual religion in

I. Jones, R.M. Spiritual Reformers, etc. p.212.

the days of Fox Boehme most certainly contributed more than a mere trickle, and it was in this surge that Fox was caught up and by it had the whole direction of his thinking ordered.

In various parts of England before the advent of Fox there were gathered groups of earnestly minded people who were feeling and seeking after a principle more stable than that provided by the established religion of their day. These groups went by various names, such as Seekers, Children of the Light, etc. It is established that there was a definite connection between these groups and similar ones already organized in the Low Countries. At the end of the sixteenth century the Collegiants had been organized by Coornhert, as we have already noted, and these people were characterized by their belief in "waiting" in their meetings. No doubt, although this cannot be proved, the teachings of Scwenckfeld greatly influenced these groups in Holland and by their spreading to England gained additional scope there. These groups of "Children of the Light" and "Seekers" were impelled onwards by the nature of their experiences until they arrived at Scwenckfeld's view of salvation as inward and progressive. This was one of the greatest contributions of Scwenckfeld, that his spirit and life were constantly acting as a leaven

and an inspiration in unostentatious ways: that though his body had long been laid to rest his soul was ever marching on in the lives of countless people who were influenced indirectly by his message. Edwards, in his book "Gangreanne" stated "Seekers greatly increased at this period." It cannot be said that all these groups were enthusiastic about their search for the truth or the light; many of them were children of their time, and living in an age of theological transition were often of unsettled religious life and opinion. To these groups Fox came as a prophet and set hearts ablaze. Often Fox won men to his position, not as isolated individuals, but in organized groups. This was true of the Mansfield group; the Preston Patrick Seekers; the Swarthmore household, and others. The soil had been well prepared and when Fox sowed, the seed's germination was not long delayed. When the first groups of Quakers were formed they called themselves, for the time being, the "Children of the Light." The Light, the "Inner Light", was the view held in common among all these groups and to this viewpoint Fox made the strongest appeal with his message. The idea was prevalent everywhere, but it needed the dynamic of a personality, such as Fox possessed, to

harness it to the purposes of an organized religious group. The groups on the Continent had had the surging power of contemporary personalities of unique insight and spiritual power. The views had passed over to England, but bereft of the power that the leaders had given. Often as a movement widens its circumference and moves away from its original centre it becomes weakened at its outer edges. Frequently the whole movement is modified at such points as are far removed from the centre. Then it is that the movement is saved, even though, perchance, changed, by the arising of a new genius who creates interest, adds new power, and in himself becomes a new centre around which the whole thing may move. In this way religion moves on in cycles, progressing or being retarded by the times, modified according to circumstance and need, but ever fitting into the contemporary situation. Though contiguous it is operating from constantly changing centres. At the beginning of the period we have been studying the centre of the whole movement was in Germany with fringes in France, Switzerland, Holland, etc. Weakening in Germany centres were established in Holland with fringes in England, and then finding a new emphasis in Boehme, only to lose it and create a new centre in England organized around the person of George Fox. The "Seekers" in England

were of the circumference until imbued with the new life that Fox brought, Francis Howgill, who became leader of a "Seeker" group near Kendal, gives much evidence for this theory in his own experience. Speaking of the "Seekers" before he joined their ranks he said:-

" Then some preached Christ within, but they themselves were without, had but words, and yet they said, all must be within - unto which my heart did cleave - and spoke of redemption, and justification, and all within, and of God appearing in man and overcoming the power of the devil. And then that in my conscience bore witness it must be so."

Here we readily see that Howgill had found a group with theories that satisfied his mind, but a group which lacked the power of their own theories. But notice the change when he heard Fox proclaim the same things. In this man's personality the brass of the "Seekers" became the gold of the Quakers, and after Howgill had heard Fox preach he
(1)
declared:-

" As soon as I heard him declare that the Light of Christ in man was the way to Christ, I believed the eternal word of truth.....and so, not only I, but many thousands more...."

The influence of the Collegiants, which had been more or less indirect, became definite in the early years of Fox's ministry. At Rynsburg in Holland there was a group

of Collegiants who were influenced in their thinking first of all by the philosophy of Descartes, and then later by the philosophy, and presence among them, of Spinoza. When the faith of this group found expression, in the year 1662, in an anonymously published book entitled "The Light and the Candlestick", the book was soon taken over by the English Quakers and circulated as a Quaker tract.

One group which found itself to be in close sympathy with the Familists was that of the Seekers. So closely alike were these two groups of Familists and Seekers that Penn in his preface to the Journal of George Fox puts them together. The former group originated in Holland at the beginning of the sixteenth century and soon reached England. Their leader was one named Henry Nicholas and he stressed the value of waiting in worship for guidance and inspiration. These people were pacifists and opposed the use of oaths and capital punishment. For Nicholas the "Inner Light" was that of the Eternal Life which we receive when we renew our minds and spirits and immerse them in the true Light. Man, for Nicholas, has the power to subject his life to the divine and in the operation receive divine light and

life into his own life. It is the dual act of giving and receiving. In this doctrine there was something of the idea of sanctification and perfection as that taught by Fox. Often these people taught that Christ's advent into the world was to reinstate men into the condition presumed to have existed before the Fall. Into this state man could be brought in this life by the unity of Man with God through the unity of man's spirit with God's spirit.

Another group which played a part in spreading the doctrines of the Continental groups in England was that of the Baptists. The first Baptist Church established in England was organized in London at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It owed its foundation to the Mennonites of Amsterdam, and was directly due to the labours of the Rev. Mr. Helwys. The form of baptism was non-immersionist. It is on record that in the year 1626 there were such churches in London, Salisbury, Coventry, Lincoln, and Tiverton. Mennonite practises and principles were largely adopted. The Mennonites' view of the doctrine of the "Inner Light" was well expressed by one of their ministers, Dirk Philips (1492 - 1559) when he said :-

I. Barclay, Robert: The Inner Life, etc. p.81.

" We must accept this Jesus Christ as the eternal word and incorruptible seed of the eternal God, the father, by the Holy Spirit in ourselves and retain Him. "

The differences which arose in the Baptist Church, and which led to the emphasis upon certain doctrinal viewpoints that later distinguished them from the Quakers, go back to a controversy that arose in Amsterdam among the Waterlander Mennonites in the year 1624. The controversy that arose between two of the teachers of the church, Hans de Ries and Nittert Obbes, led to the publishing of about thirty tracts and pamphlets on the question involved. It is interesting to record here the gist of the argument by quoting from a tract of Obbes and from a tract of Ries. Obbes said:-

" ...the written word of God, or the gospel, wheresoever it is read or preached, is the ordinary medium, or instrument, whereby repentance, faith and regeneration are effected..."

" In the same way as our corporeal life proceeds from natural means and subsists of them, the spiritual life of our souls proceeds and endures by natural means too, viz:- by the written word, or the preaching of the gospel, therefore we ought not to expect nowadays another Word, Inspiration, or Gospel, either from Heaven or from men, to build and rely upon beside the use of the written Word of God."

Obbes was here attesting the literal inerrancy of the Scripture; he was making it the sole guide for life; he

was moving back to the place where he wanted people to accept external authorities for the nurture of the inner life without attributing any authority to the life itself. Against this view Hans de Ries took up the controversy and, although the party of Obbes claimed they were defending the doctrines of one of their spiritual fathers, Scwenckfeld, we feel sure that this honour fell to the party led by Ries. Ries maintained:- (I)

"there is a divine inspiration whereby the Lord Jesus, the governor and teacher of his holy church, instructs, teaches, addresses, and inspires the faithful, viz:- through the Holy Ghost from whom they have the anointing and unction. God summons them to repentance and conversion by the written word, but besides by His Holy Spirit and His power in Christ, and several other means, e.g. his handy work in the whole creation, the law of nature written in the hearts of mankind, the light of conscience....."

These views found expression in the English Baptist churches and perhaps Fox gained a clearer conception of his own ideas on various matters by contact with them. It is known that Fox had an uncle named Pickering in London who was a Baptist. Among all the viewpoints that Fox wove into a new pattern and gave new life we must add those of certain groups in the Baptist Church, and in them we see a link added to the chain binding Quakerism to the spiritual

movements on the Continent.

When Fox came to set forth upon his mission as a sower of truth he had within his basket grain from many fields, and that much of it fell by the wayside and the fruits thereof were never garnered into the Quaker storehouse we cannot doubt. As late as 1676 Robert Barclay, the apologist, wrote a short treatise which he presented to, and which received the approval of, the Meeting in London. He said in part in the preface:- (1)

".....there are so great pretenders to inward notions and revelations of the Spirit, that there are no extravagances which they will not cloak with it."

The finer side and result of this movement were to be seen in men like Sir Harry Vane, the friend and counsellor of Oliver Cromwell. We quote from a letter which he wrote (2) in the year 1661:-

" The Kingdom of God is within you and is the dominion of God in the conscience and spirit of the mind.....This Kingdom of Christ is capable of subsisting and being managed inwardly in the minds of his people, in a hidden state concealed from the world. "

In all places, all walks of life, among men of varying ability and position, in sects widely varying in their outlook and tracing their origins back to different sources, there was one thing common to most of them in the seventeenth

1. Barclay, Robert: The Inner Life, etc. p.444.
2. Jones, R.M. Spiritual Reformers, etc. p.273.

century. It was the passion to find reality and more often than not it was felt to be in the heart of the believer. The words of Jesus "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" became a religious charter for many and to these people Fox came to be hailed as a prophet of God and a light to his people.

CHAPTER TWO

The development and implications of the doctrine as formulated by George Fox, and recorded in his Journal.

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who wrote that "an institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as.....
 Quakerism of George Fox." (1) Only by an understanding of Fox and a study of his viewpoints can the inner significance of the early Quaker movement be appreciated. "History is the biographies of great men" is only true when the great men illustrate the ideas and movements of the common people, and in this sense an understanding of Fox is a prerequisite to an adequate knowledge of early Quaker history. Fox was an outstanding example of the great number of people in his time who were waiting for the touch of his magic personality. . When we embark upon a study of the character and work of George Fox the further we go the greater our admiration for him becomes, and we begin to realize the truth that when Fox commenced to preach in the year 1647 time and the man had indeed met, and a glorious chapter in the history of religion was about to be written. Never before did a man become the "man of the hour" with greater warrant for so doing than when Fox, after a strenuous preparation in the school of human experience, commenced to propagate his message throughout the length and breadth of England.

That Fox's quality of character was in some sense

I. Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson: London, 1890; p.14.

inherent was very early shown in his life. As a sober and very religious boy he was bound to the trade of shoemaking. While engaged in this work he became well known for his standards of honesty and truth. He himself testifies to the character of his youth in his Journal, (I) for he writes:-

" When I came to eleven years of age, I knew pureness and righteousness; for while a child I was taught how to walk to be kept pure."

This is also a testimony to the religious character of his parents, who very early in his life were anxious that he should take up the work of the Ministry. But the ideas of the elder Foxes were not realized in the way they had hoped: for Fox never had an education adequate to the work of an established ministry. He had very little, if any, systematic education and spent the years of his later youth as a shepherd with an occasional interlude of shoemaking. But like his equally famous contemporary, John Bunyan, he was a very earnest student of the English Bible. He had great mental acumen and was alive to what was being thought and said around him. The stern Calvinistic theology, which provided the background of the Rev. Nathaniel Stephen's preaching in the church at

I. Journal Vol.1 p.2.

All quotations are taken from the 8th (bi-century) edition, London 1901.

Fenny Drayton, only tended to arouse his own mind to pursue the quest for truth with more earnestness. He was of that type of temperament which more readily and easily responds to the attractions of ideas than the stimuli of the objective world, although, to be sure, he used the material of the latter to provide symbols for the former, but often the world of objective reality became, for Fox, peopled with his own objectified ideas. His character was such that during the years when his soul was in the torment that belongs to sensitive spirits seeking reality he did not find any real fellowship with others. The experience of being thrown back upon his own spiritual resources helped to develop an ardent conviction that guidance is forthcoming from an indwelling spirit. We can see that Fox's educational and social lack was an asset because it provided the environment and condition which made possible quiet meditation upon life. He was not bound down in his thinking by the authority of formal learning, and every new aspect of truth could be judged impartially in the light of his own experience. These experiences were quickened by the evident fact that all through the years when he was approaching manhood he was beset by spiritual longings and religious doubts that

drove him from priest to priest, teacher to teacher, place to place, seeking solutions and satisfactions. It was the constant inability to obtain help from outside sources that forced his mind to retrospective thinking and led eventually to the religious experience that became pivotal in his life. He tells us of this experience in his journal where he records:-
(I)

" Then, O! then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition'; and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy."

It was through the discipline of brooding, meditation, studying Scripture, sensing the needs of himself and the common people, that his spirit found its right direction. His experience was ripe for insights. Because of his lack of mental content and educational background those insights came to have unusual significance for Fox. Lacking knowledge of the psychological processes taking place in his mind it was possible for him to react to certain viewpoints with greater enthusiasm than is usual, and in the enthusiasm of their perception discover the power to build a new group. Fox's knowledge of God was the result of rationalizing certain experiences, native to his temperament, but which because of supporting experience

became convictions; convictions founded not on the authority of book or priest, but on personal experience. So profound was his influence among the early Quakers, and so in line with the normal experience of thousands, that they as a sect have kept more true to the teaching of Fox than has usually been so with other groups and their founders. We have already noticed that Fox found the group of Baptists at Mansfield "a tender people"^(I) and that many of the original members of the Society had arrived at convictions concerning the Quaker way of life long before Fox began to preach, but, although the fundamental ideas of the Society of Friends abounded everywhere in and before Fox's time, to his life and labour we must attribute the spark, the fire, the enthusiasm, nay the passion, that gave form to the latent cause. Fox himself never appears to have had the least idea that he was indebted to previous, and contemporary people for any contribution to his thought.

When Fox went forth with his message he was no novice in the "practise of the presence of God"; he had not ^{to} constantly readjust the centre of his life. His deepest intuitions, the most remote moods of the soul, every ripple on the mind's great sea, had been probed and once he knew that he had experienced the presence of God in his

soul, directing and controlling it because he was willing it to be so, he had a conviction that his message was one fitted for all men to hear; that it was the only message. He had achieved within himself the balance between the urges of human nature and the promptings of the spirit. The moral, physical, and spiritual were no longer essentially, though often really, competing forces, but complementary aspects of a divine plan for human life. The inner divine nature was the axis upon which the whole world of the personality should revolve, and by which harmony could be obtained in the individual life. The "Inner Light" was not only capable of illuminating the recesses of the soul, but, also, was as a magnet holding everything in its proper place. The Fox who had been a distraught individual, buffeted by the various moods of his own spirit and a victim to the agony of his own doubts, now went forward as a unified personality because the "Inner Light" was for him an integrating force. That he had felt, rather than thought, his way to this great conviction by no means lessens the value it proved to be to him. That Fox was convinced that what was possible for him was possible for all, there can be no doubt; he did not feel himself possessed of unique qualities.

When one lady prostrated herself before him he was greatly disgusted and made this very clear to her. His message was one to all men. The early Quakers were never guilty of glorifying the individual above the group. Although many of them claimed that Fox had a divine message it never led to any worship of him; he was regarded as a perfectly human messenger. But as a human being Fox was one who had had his personality greatly changed for the better by his religious experiences. So sure was he of the veracity of these experiences, and so conscious of his purpose to tell everyone he could, that there was not any place in his life for timidity or cowardice - he stood forth a new man, unafraid.

Fox was, in addition to what we have already said concerning him, re-inforced in his work and experience by certain psychic traits. We now know that the mystic is one who can really enter into the moods and spirit of his own subliminal consciousness, and that this is the part of the mental nature through which intuitions and moral promptings often come. If in Fox the subliminal was greatly manifested, then it is perfectly natural to find other traits of this side of his nature, and this we can do. We find that he had trances, visions, premonitions,

telepathic messages, and was able to effect spiritual healing. One or two instances from the Journal will illustrate this other side of his nature and character. When a priest named Macham was trying to help Fox to cure his troubled spirit he essayed to open a vein and let some of Fox's blood run, but, so we are told, he could not produce one drop. Fox effected the cure of a woman suffering from anaemia at Mansfield Woodhouse. After the death of a Mr. Brown at Mansfield in 1647, Fox, after writing that Brown had prophesied great things concerning his future, records the following:-

" When this man was buried, a great work of the Lord fell upon me, to the admiration of many, who thought I had been dead; and many came to see me for about fourteen days. I was very much altered in countenance and person, as if my body had been new moulded or changed."

In the very next year we have evidence of his psychic endowments when he writes:-

" In the year 1648, as I was sitting in a friend's house in Nottinghamshire.....I saw there was a great crack to go throughout the earth, and a great smoke to go as the crack went;....."

When two prisoners were executed at Derby gaol for very small offences George Fox tells us that he saw their spirits; and, in 1659, seven years before the great fire

I. Journal Vol.i: p.20.
2. ibid p.23.

visited London, he had a vision of the city with the gates down and the city a wreck lying in heaps. All through the Journal we have evidence of the quality and sensitiveness of his psychical makeup.

This sensitiveness to events was also a sensitiveness towards people and their natures; he either had his faculties for perception highly developed, or an intuitive awareness that rarely failed him in his judgments of people was part of his general ability. It was this fact that came out so well in his rare ability to speak to the "condition of people." In some people we should say that the psychic traits that Fox possessed were an evidence of derangement, but when we consider Fox's life and work such a view is impossible. The cynic may say "genius is akin to madness," but the world is ever ready to pass such a judgment upon men who live up to the very highest that they know. When we picture Fox walking ten or twelve miles across fields to do some little service because of an unfulfilled intention that gives his conscience little rest, we may think he was somewhat foolish, but such foolishness based on conscientiousness is the stuff of which religious leaders have always been made. That he was not an abnormal man in the general things of human life is testified to by the fact that after his first imprisonment in 1650 he was offered a captaincy in the army the soldiers saying

they would have none but Fox. But there also may be
 (I)
 something in what a writer has said that:-

".....some of his pathological symptoms point to a
 psychical constitution of an unstable sort."

However, we have an abundance of evidence to show that
 the acceptance and influence of new ideation did lead
 to an accession of power and energy.

The ordinary individual is aware that in the realm
 of religion his spirit is often hedged around with
 limitations; he is at times a spirit "in prison"; the
 soul uplifting experiences he longs for never come to
 him. For the mystic these limitations and conditions are
 often nullified by an experience when he feels himself
 'en rapport' with God, or with some reality higher or
 deeper than he has previously known. Often with this
 experience there comes a sense of reality and certainty
 often lacking in the ordinary religious experience. Either
 with, or as a direct result of, the sense of certainty that
 comes with such experiences there is a new sense of personal
 power. The experience has two phases: the psychical
 nature of the transcending experience and the mental
 quickening which results, and for both of these things we

have already seen that Fox was well equipped. His major difficulty was to formulate the content of these experiences into words, and he was forced to give expression to them in terms native to his intelligence and environment. Any mystical experience, whether it be the divine communings of the soul or the rapture that pervades the spirit as it glances on a superb picture or listens to the notes of a musical masterpiece, is to a large extent indescribable. It is this fact, with the one of poor educational background, that accounts for the many inconsistencies, which, however, are not serious, in Fox's descriptions of the "Inner Light." Fox did, however, so organize his thought and expression that when he spoke to others concerning his belief he could make his message clear and convincing. So clear and convincing, so suited to the temper and spirit of his age, that Fox became the leader of an idealistic and spiritual revolution in the days of the Commonwealth. In turning men's thoughts in upon themselves he really was turning something of religious thought to the conception of a theo-centric life.

Although it might be said that Fox's conceptions of God were such as took their rise mainly in his own experience, and were, therefore, moulded by those experiences

without the interposition of the reflective faculties, it is true that the doctrine of the "Inner Light" became the great rallying point for thousands of thinking people. It appealed to them because Fox also gave due attention to the practical ramifications of the conception, and upon such direct interpretations sought to create a religious fellowship. To claim to be possessed of an "Inner Light" was, by deduction, to see that "Light" in others and this led to the development of an increased social awareness that gave added appeal to the movement - in such an organization the individual would never feel himself to be a spiritual nonentity.

When the ministers in Scotland heard that Fox proposed to visit their country they were aroused to anger; and in "The Scotch Priest's Principles" we can read the curses that were drawn up to be read in the churches. The first one was:-

" Cursed is he that saith, everyman hath a light within him sufficient to lead him to salvation; and let all the people say, Amen."

The "Inner Light" had become the mark by which the adherents of the new movement could be, above all else, distinguished.

It is not possible to show that Fox's views were

a direct reflection of those current in his day, but it is, of this we can be sure, well attested that in the formation of viewpoints, even those that seem peculiar to the individual, there is an unconscious assimilation and imitation of those in currency in one's time - Fox was no exception to this rule. We may discount the force of heredity, but that it plays a part in moulding our mental equipment is undoubted. Every individual, unless he is of unusual type, assumes the ideas and characteristics of the group that impresses him most of all. Most men are born something or other - rather they are decreed by their social inheritance to a disposition for something or other - rather than arriving at it by a process of mature deliberation. The change the genius makes is often in an altered emphasis; but the thing he emphasizes is more often than not already present in the group to which he belongs. Fox emphasized the "Inner Light" doctrine and in so doing chose a point at which all things could be made to meet. It is very evident that when he began to preach, he had not thought out or sensed all of the implications of the doctrine which he held so dearly. Like so many before and since he had made a leap of adventurous faith to his great

central idea; his own experience was a sufficient guarantee for the validity of the view thus accepted. He was primarily a theological pragmatist. His message was burdened with the idea that a recognition of God's presence in the heart would have a great influence upon the conduct of life- it was a faith that would work. In winning men to his viewpoint Fox was convinced that he was bringing them to a knowledge of God that would result in an experience of God. It was this experience of God's presence within that the first generation of Quakers never lost, and which convinced them that the Kingdom of God would only come when it was universally recognized as a result of the propagation of Fox's message.

The fourth Gospel provided the Scriptural authority for their conviction, and Fox and the members of the Quaker movement were immersed in the teaching of that book. All through John's gospel the emphasis is upon the quality of life rather than the ritual observance of religious custom, and this found an echo in the lives of these spiritual pioneers. The quality of life mattered because it had the potentiality of becoming divine by reason of the presence of God within. Just imagine how this emphasis would come as a new gospel to the people who

had been vainly trying to reconcile the God of the external world, the God of the priests and creeds, with the God who spoke in their moments of meditation and quiet thought. A God of some far horizon, from some distant place in the cosmic wilderness, who can only be found in the chantings of a church service, in the observance of outward ritual, will not satisfy the heart of the mystic. The mystic's God must be "nearer than hands and feet." Many people need satisfaction for the "feeling states" of the religious life. Often we are sore troubled by a conflict between the emotional and mental phases of our lives, and this is carried over into the realm of our concepts of God so that we are in a quandary between what we feel about him and what we think about him. Fox reconciled the God without with the God within by a view that made both conceptions possible and harmonizable. We have no direct evidence in his writings and recorded speeches that he ever felt that if the "Inner Light" and its conscious possession by the individual were the primary fact of spiritual experience, a different interpretation, from that of the Church, of the doctrines of the Incarnation, Atonement, Forgiveness, Heaven and Hell would be needed. He accepted the usual

theological system of his day and applied his doctrine to those parts of it that by their nature were obviously out of harmony with it. It was left to the individual members of the group to apply the guiding principle to all matters of concern, and if they saw fit, to modify their own viewpoints. On matters other than the central theme and its interpretation no attempt at dogmatism was made. The spirit of dogmatism was, and is, out of harmony with ^{the} essential Quaker spirit, and only when it has shown itself in the ranks of the movement has disagreement taken place. If the original spirit of the movement had always prevailed no important schism would ever have been recorded in the history of Quakerism. Without knowing it the seventeenth century Quakers were three hundred years ahead of their time and the general religious movement; they were advance guards of twentieth century modernism for they tested all, not by any external, though historic authority, but, by the authority of the human spirit and reason.

With this background of the character and intensity of conviction of Fox we should be well prepared to essay the task of attempting to discover, on the basis of what he wrote in his Journal, just what Fox meant by the "Inner

Light" and some of its implications in the conduct of the adherents thereto. We can best do this under the following headings.

Nature of the "Inner Light."

The "Inner Light" was not a state of mind which resulted from logical processes, neither was it the moral sensitivity, which results from a sincere attempt to live by certain social standards of conduct and belief, which we call conscience. For Fox it was not the natural reason with which every normal man is endowed: it was an inner state of enlightenment which was the direct result of God's presence within. That that inner state was sometimes confounded with its cause is to be seen from the way in which so often, for Fox, the "Inner Light" was not that which had dispelled darkness, but the inner condition of being enlightened. It was, however, essentially something of God; a type of divine emanation; it was in the heart of the individual. To this something Fox gave many names and attributed various activities. Writing in the Journal he says:- (I)

" And now, my dear Friends, the Lord doth require more of you than he doth of other people; because he hath committed more to you. He requires the fruits of his Spirit, of the light of the Gospel, of the Grace, and of the Truth...."

(I)

And again he writes:-

" The Holy Spirit teacheth the holy, gentle, meek and quiet lowly mind to answer the seed, that Christ hath sown upon all grounds; and to answer the light, grace, and Spirit, and the gospel in every creature."

The action by which the individual became aware of this presence was essentially innate. This subjectivity of the experience was its own guarantee to the experiencing individual of the reality of the inner bestowal of something deeper than the merely human processes. Before the sad occurrence of James Naylor's defection, and the consequent increased emphasis upon group guidance and direction, Fox was confident that the individual's own sense of definiteness and compulsion in the matter of inward guidance was a sufficient standard by which to judge of the reality of the whole experience. It was later on that the recognition of the need for corporate guidance and control was emphasized as an essential check upon individual vagaries. Always one had to commence with one's experience rather than with dogma; the belief would produce the effect only if one placed oneself in an attitude of receptivity. It was fundamental to Fox's whole idea of the "Inner Light" that it was something of God and Christ manifested in the life as an abiding presence. It was with this conviction motivating their conduct that thousands left the ordinary

churches and joined the Quaker movement. It is to this spirit within, and not to the outer man alone, that the true minister will direct his attention. "So the ministers of the Spirit must minister to the Spirit that is in prison" ⁽¹⁾ Fox writes, and also "....to mind the ⁽²⁾ good spirit of God in themselves."

One of the favourite names that Fox gave to the "Inner Light" was that of "Seed." By this word he carried over a biological term and adopted it for the use of indicating something with potentialities of growth if planted in the right soil and environment. Its use was to indicate that the heart of man was the natural habitat of God's spirit which was as a seed sown, growing up, and bearing fruit in the individual's life. This "seed" is not insensitive to the environmental changes ⁽³⁾ in the life of the person. Fox says:-

" All they that make God's people suffer, make the Seed suffer in their own particulars, and imprison the Just there. Such will not visit the seed in themselves, but cast it into prison in others, and not visit it in prison." ⁽⁴⁾

And again he writes:-

".....and that all people....should feel this seed in them..."

and "....must come to witness this seed, Christ in them." ⁽⁵⁾

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| 1. Journal: vol.i;p.316 | 2. ibid: vol.ii:p.277 |
| 3. ibid: vol.ii;p.416 | 4. ibid: vol.i; p.418 |
| 5. ibid: vol.i; p.420. | |

Once again a confusion between cause and effect invades our subject's thinking, for the "Inner Light" has the power to prepare the heart for the reception of the "seed." We are told:-
(1)

" The light has the power to draw the interests from the temporal and material things to the things of the spirit within.....it brings into a being of endless joy and peace that the seed of God may reign in you all."

In one passage it seems as if Fox has **coupled** goodness with God, for he writes:-
(2)

" His truth spreadeth, and friends here are in unity and peace, and of good report, answering the good, or that of God in the people."

He may have had it in mind that anything from God in the heart would by its divine nature be good, or he may have felt that all goodness, whatever its source, was in reality part of the essence of God. This is also so concerning his attitude to truth: truth is an attribute of God and truth in the hearts of believers is indicative of the presence of God. We read:-
(3)

" Therefore must all people come to the grace and spirit of truth in their own hearts, to know the God of truth, who is a spirit; and in the Spirit and truth to worship."

Fox held to the doctrine of the pre-existent Christ, and the "Inner Light" was of this same pre-existent being.

This light which existed before the world was created is of the nature of eternal wisdom - the Logos doctrine - and is manifested once more in the hearts of the faithful; being enlightened with it they view the world with a new understanding, with something of the wisdom of God, and can comprehend the meaning of the world and its actions. Fox does not appear to have held any conception of a progressive development of human character whereby the individual gradually comes to a realization of certain moral truths. His inner life is the immediate result of his reactions either to the presence of an evil spirit, or the spirit of Jesus within. The influence of these inner forces is always the same, and Fox did not believe that either was ever untrue to its character. A change in character was either due to a diminution or increase of the power of these forces, and never to an increasing awareness of their significance for life. Our attention must be directed to knowing this revelation within in its complete character as the "Spirit of Christ"; "Christ himself"; Christ the "Word"; the "Light" of Jesus; and Christ the "teacher."

Every conception and idea that can be pressed into service is used by Fox to describe this wonderful "Inner Light," this presence. There is evidently an identity

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| 1. Journal: vol.ii: p.225 | 2. ibid vol.i: p.50 |
| 3. ibid vol.i: p.370 | 4. ibid vol.i: p.94 |
| 5. ibid vol.i: p.196. | |

in his mind between the Jesus of history and his spirit,
 (I)
 for he records:-

" The principle of the Quakers is the Spirit of Christ, who died for us, and is risen for our justification; by which we know that we are his. He dwelleth in us by his spirit."

In all this work of bringing the individual to a recognition of his divine endowment God is not indifferent. It is as if the spirit of God in the heart is restless for union with God, and that this union is effected when the spirit is brought into play by its operation in the human life. When the spirit within is allowed to function it prepares the heart for the incoming of other emanations from God's spirit. Reprobates have the divine potentiality, but the spirit of Christ is not fully present in their hearts. In one or two places in the Journal we find the "Inner Light" named as a principle without any definition of the meaning of this second term. To feel its operation demands that the one seeking to know its power shall be of like character; "be tender to the tender principle" is the attitude to adopt towards others as also to the life within oneself.

Another manifestation of this divinity in man is as a "word" of God; a message in the soul which the person may hear. When the individual is sitting in quietness of

mind; when he has the spirit of lowliness that does not allow his own spirit to be too prominent, then this "Inner Light" becomes the divine inner voice speaking into the "inner ear" of the private chambers of the soul. "Be still and know that I am God" for Fox became "be still and hear that I am God." When this voice speaks the word it utters is "pure", it can be trusted and will verify itself by its own appeal to a like quality in the hearer.

The "word" takes upon itself the nature of "law" and by its rule the life should be governed. It is against this "law" that the human nature so often comes into conflict, and creates a condition of inner strife. Accept the "word" as "law" and a central authority has been established and harmony is the lot of the spirit and life. As Paul said that the Law was a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ, so this "inner law" will educate the soul in the processes whereby it may seek full unity with God. It may so guide and instruct the person that he may by following it come to discover the divine within that spoke the "word." He may not only listen to the "word" being spoken within, but he may also come to know its source. All the time this process of speaking and teaching is going on

in the heart, but it is of little use until the individual wills to know it. Fox said concerning those who had
(1)
listened to him preach:-

".....that they were directed to the Lord's teaching in themselves."

This teaching of God in the heart of the individual is something more than the negative influence of latent teaching, it is active and positive as a teacher itself: one is not simply to look and listen for teaching within the heart, but also to seek for their inward teacher. Not only did Fox instruct his listeners regarding the nature of inward teaching but he also pointed out the
(2)
presence of a divine teacher. He said:-

" Then I directed the people to their inward teacher, Christ Jesus their Saviour..."

Always, for Fox, any facet of divinity within man goes back beyond Christ to God himself. Christ is a manifestation of God, and when Fox speaks of Christ we are always to understand that back of Christ there stands God. As teaching and a teacher indicate activity, so their presence within man is indicative of the activity of God. We read in the Journal that when Fox spoke to
(3)
men it was with this thought in mind, for he said:-

1. Journal: vol.i: p.107. 2. ibid vol.i: p.87
3. ibid vol.i: p.247.

" ...to the measure of the life of God in
thee I speak...."

(I)

and his own personal view was that the Light was:-

" ...a guide within, to keep me in the upright
life of God."

This manifestation of God within man by its own activity

(2)

and directing power is "the witness of God" and will

often lead to a natural fear of God. If the manifestations

of the divine were capable of gradation then this "holy

(3)

fear of God in the heart" would create the first condition

necessary to the recognition of the place divine wisdom

plays in the spiritual economy of man's inner life. Man

who thus orders his inner life will be ready to apply

the exhortation of Fox to silence, for Fox "exhorted

(4)

them to hearken to the voice of God in their own hearts."

Fox did not waste time in idle speculations regarding the

fundamental nature of man; he would not enter the lists to

debate whether man were a religious animal or not. He

assumed that man had a religious instinct and proceeded

to organize his life on this basis and the fruit justified

the belief. He had no reason to ask himself the question

whether the divinity in man was something inherent or

not; he knew that he himself was endowed with power not

natural to human life. For Fox, if a man wanted and would

1. Journal: vol.i: p.63.

2. ibid vol.i: p.288.

3. ibid vol.ii:p.270.

4. ibid vol.i: p.125.

presume this presence and organize his life around it then the consequent experience would indicate that he had aroused a dormant principle to life and action, or had created the condition necessary to its advent in the human spirit, or had commenced the process of spiritual growth within that had resulted in such fruitage.

In that Fox asserted his belief that religion as a personal experience had its primary cause in some condition of the inner life, rather than in some incentive of the external circumstances, he was at one with the spiritual reformers. If the early Quaker differentiated between the inherent religious nature of man and a possession of something of the divine spirit of God he eventually so closely related them that they became, to all intents and purposes, one and identical. It was on the basis of that inner spiritual experience that the convert to Quakerism was expected to base his faith rather than upon the authority of the teachings of Fox. The Quakers have held tenaciously to the doctrine of an indwelling Light, but they have had difficulty in interpreting its personal meaning. Always this difficulty results in reducing religious problems to questions concerning personal experience; and, after all, this is where religious emphasis should be placed.

That the first Quakers set the authority of the

"Inner Light" above all others of the Church was a most logical position for them to take up, because they were firmly convinced that the divine within was the judge of the manifestations of the Church's faith without. The ramifications of the doctrine of the "Inner Light" for Fox, on the basis of the Journal, can be further studied under specific headings.

Extent of the bestowal of the "Inner Light."

Often religious groups have been of an aristocratic disposition because they have held or implied that their adherents have been in some measure set apart or above the rest of mankind by God; they have looked upon themselves as divine favourites. Even to-day in many groups, of which the British-Israelites on the one hand and the Roman Catholic Church on the other are clear examples, this spirit exists. Sometimes a modification of this idea, without any lessening of the spirit of pride, has created groups arrogating spiritual powers to themselves and claiming an authority over the spiritual well-being of mankind. Again, the Church has at times claimed the sole right to interpret and mediate the truth of Scripture to the souls of men. Fox was opposed to any idea that God dealt in various ways with different people; he believed all were

"the sons of God" and on that basis were treated alike.

The power by which God sought to express his will in the lives of men was the "gospel", and it was evident in the world long before any witness of it appeared in the written records of God's dealings with mankind. Fox expressed it thus:-
(1)

" I told them the gospel was the power of God, which was preached before Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, or any of them were printed or written; and it was preached to every creature (of which a great part might never see or hear of those four books) so that every creature was to obey the power of God: for Christ, the spiritual man, would judge the world according to the gospel, that is, according to his invisible power...."

Christ came as a light into the world, but his advent, Fox believed, co-incided with the appearance of man upon the earth. He was ever in the hearts of men trying to win them to a belief in God. This witness within would more easily bring men to remember and acknowledge God than a cross of wood or stone, or some of the devices of the Church; for man:-
(2)

"he shall not need to have a cross of wood or stone, to put him in mind of Christ, or of his cross, which is the power of God manifest in the inward parts."

It was this doctrine of the universal endowment of man with the divine spirit that levelled all social barriers and classes and made the first Quaker groups into a fine

1. Journal: vol.ii: p.8
2. ibid vol.i: p.223.

democratic organization in which the divinity of man not only indicated why men were all one before God, but also demanded they should be one in any organization that represented God on earth; for "...honouring all men is reaching that of God in everyman." The thought that one is divinely blessed with wonderful inner potentialities does not result in spiritual pride because it is realized that all men are similarly blessed. This is the belief that levels all men in the group, but elevates them in the eyes of each other. (I) Fox wrote:-

" Therefore, keep to the tender spirit of God in all humility, that in it you may know that ye are all members one of another, and all have an office in the church."

This light is not dependent upon the physical life; it is the very basis of immortality itself and the guarantee that all men will inherit the Kingdom. To a generation of people whose hope of a future existence was definitely linked to the acceptance of certain beliefs and the practise of certain external rites, and who held that those who did not conform in these matters were excluded from such a hope of enjoying eternal life, this declaration of the meaning and extent of the endowment of the "Inner Light" must have come with the force of a shock. The "Inner Light" was the

evidence that all men possessed the promise of immortality. The Lord found temples for his spirit to dwell in, in red, yellow, black, white, and, in fact, in all human bodies everywhere. It was this which gave grandeur to men and women everywhere. It was an immortal spirit because it was of God. Fox was not prepared to investigate all the implications of his belief which implied the universal condition of a divine immanence in all men. He would, perhaps, have used the words of Jesus¹ and declared that God's spirit within did not imbue men with an innate divinity, but only lifted them into the high and noble relationship belonging to "sons of God." As the child partakes of something of the nature of his father, so men partake of something of the nature of God. Having something of God in all men, men can only differ in the quality and value of the spirituality they develop as a result of giving that within scope to purge and elevate the life. No exceptions were made to this view (I) that all men had this gift: George Fox recorded:-

" Now the Lord opened to me by his invisible power that every man was enlightened by the divine light of Christ and I saw it shine through all."

Fox has left many evidences in the Journal of this

(I)

attitude and view. A few will suffice here. He tells us:-

" I affirmed and proved that Balaam had the Spirit of God, and that wicked men have the Spirit of God; else how could they quench it, and vex it, and grieve it, and resist the Holy Ghost,"

(2)

also:-

" So I proved that the grace of God had appeared unto all men."

On one occasion when discussing the "Inner Light" and the Spirit of God with the governor of Carolina, Fox put his view to a practical test by calling an Indian to them and asking him if he had anything within him that reproved him when he did wrong: he also recorded in his Journal, when referring to the negroes of America:-

(3)

" For there is something in them that tells them they should not practise these or any other evils."

Religious convictions are no bar to this wonderful gift,

(4)

for:-

"....the power of the Lord is the same in all, is over all, and doth reach the good in all..."

(5)

and "....enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, both Jews and Gentiles."

Accepting the fact of an indwelling spirit carried with it certain definite implications in all forms of thought and conduct. The Spirit became an integral part of the mental life and daily living of Fox and the early Quakers.

1. Journal vol.i: p.34
3. ibid vol.ii:p.157
5. ibid vol.i: p.494

2. ibid vol.i: p.62
4. ibid vol.ii:p.187

In the light of present day thought we may think that this belief of Fox led to some peculiar views and ethics, but the man and the movement are to be judged, not by any apparent inconsistencies of thinking, but by the general consistency of conduct and belief. Because they held fervently to the doctrine of the "Inner Light" they had to bear testimony to various other viewpoints which they believed were absolutely consequent upon the former. We can here study the views of Fox concerning matters of religious, civil, and personal belief and attitude.

Scripture.

Fox did not claim to be able to write religious treatises which were equal in power and purpose to any in Holy Writ, but he did claim that any adequate knowledge or understanding of it could only be enjoyed in virtue of the fact that men and women were possessed of something of the spirit that prompted the original writers to embark on the task. So subservient to the "Inner Light" did Fox make the Scriptures that in one of his epistles he declared that Christ, or his spirit, was so all sufficing that the Quaker meetings were not dependent for their continuance upon the possession and use of them. If Scripture was given forth by
(the

spirit of God then it was essential to be possessed of that spirit to understand it. Fox believed that man is endowed with an inner spiritual sense which is essential to an understanding of anything with a spiritual import. How can man, he would ask, appreciate religion and spiritual truth if he has not the sense, beyond the ordinary faculties of man, to receive and judge them? He that lacks the spirit within lacks the power to understand that which comes forth from it. This viewpoint (1) of Fox is well summed up in his words:-

"that the Holy Scriptures were given forth by the spirit of God, and all people must first come to the spirit of God in themselves, by which they might know God and Christ.....and by the same spirit know the Holy Scriptures."

Scripture is not the complete expression of the Word of God; it is an objective record of what the authors thought as a consequence of the influence of God upon their minds, but all mankind is open to the influence of this inner manifestation of God's presence. When man gave expression to what moved him within he became the organ of God's speaking. So Fox, at the end of a letter, could write (2) without any misgiving:-

" Given forth from the spirit of God through G.F." In this way he was claiming that what he had written was

his interpretation of God's spoken word within. All Scripture depended for its authority, in the personal life, upon the subjective appreciation and appeal it made. This inner condition is the guarantee of the spiritual worth of Scripture, for Fox wrote:-
(1)

" To thee this is the word of God; to that of God in thy conscience do I speak, which will witness the truth of what I write, and will condemn thee."

When his parents would have supported their own views by an appeal to Scripture, Fox tells us:-
(2)

".....I brought them Scriptures and told them there was an anointing within man to teach him, and the Lord would teach his people himself."

He disclaimed the view that man is dependent upon others for learning about God. The Law of God is written in the heart, the "Inner Light" is a beam that ever shines, and man can come whenever he wills to a recognition and use of this Light and Law. In the interpretation and understanding of Scripture the universal gift of the "Inner Light" means that all men everywhere are gifted with the ability necessary for this task. We find Fox giving expression to this by writing:-
(3)

".....all men by the spirit might understand the Scriptures, which were given forth from the spirit of God."

1. Journal: vol.ii; p.150
3. ibid vol.ii: p.390

2. ibid vol.i: p.8.

(1)

And, again:-

".....and turned them to the spirit of God in their hearts, which would reveal the mysteries of the Scriptures to them."

Fox naturally entered into the circumstances of his day and tried to understand them, and everywhere he met people who were prepared to argue about the interpretation of Scripture. He saw, as we see to-day, that the body of Christ, which is his church on earth, was split into antagonistic groups because of varying interpretations of Scripture. Scripture was the infallible word and guide to many, but only infallible insofar as they could fit it into their own grooves and modes of thinking. What was the secret of these dissensions, and the hope of overcoming them that Fox held out? He penned words that for insight into the meaning of Scripture for his day were, as for our own still, vital and authoritative. He
(2)
said:-

" And now, my friends, the holy men of God wrote the scriptures as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and all Christendom are on heaps about those scriptures, because they are not led by the same Holy Ghost as those that gave forth the scriptures; which Holy Ghost they must come to in themselves, and be led by, if they come into all the truth of them."

In the matter of the interpretations and appreciation of

Scripture we can readily see that Fox was again a true mystic. The attitude of such an one is well summed up
(1)
in Peake's Commentary thus:-

" The mystic claims to reach this knowledge of God by means of the "inner light" He repudiates all appeal to external authority; because it is external, it can have no real bearing on conscience, which must and can only be illumined from within.....their method, uncorrected by any independent standard, is too subjective in character, too vague in its results, to satisfy the needs of the average soul. The most fruitful mystics have been those nurtured in an atmosphere of objective religion which has corrected their indefiniteness of statement and their tendency to substitute a morbid introspection for sound teaching and healthy activity."

The Ministry.

When Fox was faced with intellectual and spiritual problems, in the days when his religious convictions were struggling to cross the desert of despair and unbelief, he naturally looked to the ministry of the Church as one source of help and guidance. He went from priest to priest in a vain search for enlightenment, and many and various were the solutions offered for his problems. It was in some degree consequent upon these unfortunate experiences with the clergy that he had the great and momentous experience in which his inner life was unified, and his life work given an aim. This experience is very

I. Peake's Commentary on the Bible: p.7.

(1)

vividly described for us in the Journal as follows:-

" When all my hopes in them (the clergy) and all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then, O! then I heard a voice which said 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition, and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.... and this I knew experimentally."

From the uncertainty of the ministry he had turned and found certainty within his own soul. Without any of the education deemed necessary to fit a priest for his vocation Fox had himself discovered the well-springs of divine nourishment, and henceforth he was not going to be dependent upon outward circumstances and helps for reaching the heart of God. He was forced by his own experiences, and those of many others, to come to the
(2)
final conclusion that:-

"to be bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not sufficient to fit a man to be a minister of God."
(3)

He also said that:-

" God was come to teach his people himself."

We have to ask the question whether Fox really understood the place the priesthood played in the life of many people who were never visited with the type of experience, or felt the same need, as Fox. It is probable that Fox

I. Journal: vol.i: p.II 2. ibid vol.i: p.II
3. ibid vol.ii:p.281.

never faced the question of the validity of a priesthood for a people lacking the experiential background that he had. The Quaker, in general, has never fully realized that the acceptance of his doctrine and its allied subjective experience calls for a maturity of thought and experience. Quakerism's organization has been developed without any direct reference to the need for educating the outsider so that he may more easily appreciate what is entailed in the religious viewpoints of the movement. In America, by the adoption of a pastoral system, some attempt has been made to remedy this failure. Fox would have replied to this charge, perhaps, that his experience was possible to all men and that the sole object of the ministry should be, not to pander to the religious instinct of man on a lower plane than was possible to it, but, to strive to arouse it to a consciousness of its divine potentiality. For Fox the "Inner Light" had taken the place of the episcopal system; but, also, it gave each individual a right, a privilege, and obligation, if urged by inner compulsion, to take part in the services. He wrote:-

" We had Christ to be our Bishop, Priest, and Shepherd to feed us, and oversee us, and he ruled in our hearts, so we could all sit in silence, enjoying our teacher..."

The Quaker minister was one who felt that God was

unmistakably speaking to him within, and his message was regarded as the direct message of God to the hearts of his listeners. We can see why the early ministers of the Quaker groups were very prophetic in their utterances and prophet-like in their demeanour; they believed they were messengers of God himself. The quality of the ministry shows clearly that Fox and his followers were absolutely convinced of the divine nature of the "Inner Light." Their enthusiasm was the enthusiasm of the first proclaimers of Christ's gospel, and for the same reason; they believed themselves to be in an analogous position to that of the first apostles who preached a gospel received first-hand. These ministers of Fox and his gospel of the "Inner Light" were thrown back upon their own spiritual resources and experiences, and what they lacked in cultural background only deprived their message of some of the finish of a vase without the flowers, therein, losing any of their scent; the medium of communication may have been lacking in refinement, but the message carried the earmarks of devotion and enthusiasm. If the ministry of the Church at times failed the individual, the ministry of this subjective fire never did. Out of the depths of profound feeling

(I)

and experience Fox could write:-

" Christ, who had enlightened me, gave me his light to believe in, he gave me hope, which he himself revealed in me, and he gave me his spirit and grace, which I found sufficient in the deeps and in weakness."

Salvation.

One of the greatest holds that the Church has exercised over the minds of men has been in the matter of salvation; men at heart are afraid of the uncertainty of the future. When the Church has claimed to have final authority over the souls of men it has won an adherence from thousands who, in their ignorance and superstition, have believed it, or who have wished to be on "the safe side" in this matter. Whatever our philosophy may be, most of us are aware of an external standard of right and wrong, the violation of which carries certain moods and feelings of guilt; the depth of the moods or feelings depends upon certain personal factors. Through the centuries the Church has built up the conception that life here is definitely linked with the life hereafter, and the violation or otherwise of the Church's law is definitely bound up with one's possible inheritance of the heavenly state. The sense of guilt with which a man

is endowed has been taken as a proof for the Calvinistic doctrine of the Fall and the predestination of man's soul to either Heaven or Hell, or for the assumption that on account of human necessity God has committed to the Church the power whereby man may be saved from the condition consequent upon the actions of Adam and Eve. In this matter Fox was not so free from the influence of his time as he was in other spheres of human reasoning, and, with the early quakers, he accepted a modified view of the doctrine that all men were depraved because the sin of Adam had had a universal influence.

The early quakers were, however, free from the abominable theory of human sin that condemns innocent children to Hell in spite of their sinlessness. It must be said that for Fox and his contemporaries of the Quaker fold, that though they were concerned regarding man's salvation from any possible perdition, and in this respect were somewhat orthodox, yet they gave such questions relatively small place in their work and thought. It is only when we come to the period of separations that we find any prominence given to questions concerning Hell. The explanation for this is that they concentrated their attention upon propagating the doctrine of the "Inner Light" and gave their subjective experience such an important place, that other questions became ignored.

Fox himself was more concerned with life as it can be lived here than with life as it might be in Heaven. This does not mean that Fox was earthbound in his vision, but that reality was his first interest before he began to speculate. The "Inner Light" was for him a reality and its first potentiality was its possibility of changing the earthly human lives of men and women. Salvation, for Fox, might affect one's status in the after-world, but its first fruits were those garnered in the present life. Salvation was the unity of a human soul with Christ, but how the life and death of the historical person of Christ affected this view Fox never worked out. He had no easy scheme to account for the appearance of Jesus as an emanation or witness of God in historical time and as the same witness in human hearts from the beginning of time. He knew that recognition of God's presence in the individual brought a change, a wonderful change in his own case, and often was accompanied by a state of inner tranquillity. He asked the question of himself what this new state of life was akin to: he saw it was akin to nothing in the individual's normal experience, and solved the problem by presuming it was the state in which Adam and Eve were before the Fall. The union of man with the "Inner Light",

with that of God in the human heart, resulted in salvation, which restored man to the primitive state of happiness and peace of our biblical forefathers. He recognized that the future salvation which the Church offered was often of such a nature that the responsibility of the Church was moved into an indefinite place and time. Fox stated his view of the position of the early Quakers thus:-
(1)

" For all the sect-masters in Christendom (so-called) have pretended to build up Adam and Eve's fallen house, and when they have got people's money, they tell them the work cannot be perfectly done here; and so their house lies as it did. But I told the people Christ was come to do it freely, who, by one offering, hath perfected for ever all them that are sanctified, and renews them in the image of God, which man and woman were in before they fell, and makes man and woman's house as perfect again as God made them at the first; and this Christ, the heavenly man, doth freely."

This statement of Fox is really too deep and involved to represent adequately, and in the simple tone of Fox, his fundamental view of Salvation; it was really an attempt to square his viewpoint with the theology of the time on a point he did not fully understand. His stand on the question of the "Inner Light" and Salvation is expressed more explicitly and Fox-like in his words:-
(2)

" I directed them to the grace of God in themselves, which would teach them, and bring them salvation."

1. Journal: vol.i: p.465
2. ibid vol.i: p.115

All the implications inherent in the doctrine of the Fall which applied to the earthly life of man were made of non-account by Fox and his friends with their assertion that the work of the Fall was undone by the work of the "Inner Light" which restored man to his former state of innocence; but always the compelling thought of this idea was that of the "Inner Light."

Human Wisdom.

The true mystic has always felt that he has arrived at a depth and experience of truth beyond the ordinary reaches of the intelligence; often he has felt this aspect of truth to be at variance with the concepts of mind. Sometimes a dualistic view of the world has been held which has supported this view of the possibility of the human spirit finding levels of reality beyond the range of the ordinary cognitive faculties. In fact, it was held by Fox that the ordinary faculties were not to be relied upon as a medium for receiving divine truth. The bad principle of this dualism attempted to guide man into a wrong way of living by usurping the functions of the mind for its own base purposes. For this reason the mind was always suspected of being motivated by other than the forces of ordinary human life. The real message to the

human was received through the medium of the "Inner Light" and was earmarked by the spirit of God. From this message any deviation was in the direction of what Fox called "notions." Truth was not to be found in the mind, as such, but in the spirit; the earthly will was often the snare used "for the enchanter and sorcerer" to lead man astray. The spirit of God within is pure and immortal, and has the power to renew the image of God within, but in the mind that is full of despair, in the mind that presumes to value its own content, the devil and the "Prince of the Air" find refuge. This being the case the faculties of human reason and the sciences connected with the thinking processes and knowledge were, as in the case of the ministry, useless in any attempt to find God within. Fox wrote:-

" I took the opportunity to declare the way of truth unto them, opening unto them 'how they might come to know God and Christ, and his law and gospel': and showing them that 'they could never know it by study, nor by philosophy, but by divine revelation through the spirit of God, opening to them in the stillness of their minds.' "

It was this view of the place of the wisdom of man that gave the early Quakers the mystical interest that still characterizes many of them. Mystical intuition is the only road that can lead men and women to a deeper knowledge

and belief in the working efficacy of the "Inner Light". Intuition is sometimes the name given to the conscious process, all too inadequate as a guide to the fundamental process, by which men and women sense the reality of God's presence in the Universe and at the heart of their own experience.

The Church.

Fox accepted only one historic Church ordained of God, and that was the Temple of the Jews at Jerusalem. When Christ came and revealed the inward nature of true religion then the purpose for which the Temple had been established was ended. So wrote Fox on this point:-⁽¹⁾

".....whereas that temple, which God had commanded at Jerusalem, Christ came to end the service of; and they that received and believed in him, their bodies became temples of God....."

With this endowment of the human spirit the closest resemblance to a church is the Quaker group. God was no longer to be found in an Holy of Holies of a man-made temple, or to be found in the interior of a church building induced therein by the singing of psalms and the saying of prayers. He only came to be in a steeple-house, as Fox called churches, by the advent of people therein who had found in their hearts the evidence of God's presence.

The consecration of a church was by the continued presence therein of consecrated people: divinely endowed personality was the qualifying cause for any peculiar character that the church might possess. The doctrine of the "Inner Light" threw the responsibility of the church service back upon the individual worshipper; the quality of the individual's spiritual life and religion, and the bent of his heart and mind in a service of worship, determined the quality and effectiveness of such a service.

The waiting of an early Quaker group was not simply a negative gathering of individual Quietists, each one wrapped up in his own soul. This may have been partially true, but a greater experience was theirs as a consequence of each worshipper contributing to the general mood of the group. This connection between the corporate life of the group and the individual's own experience was to be seen in the name by which the first organized groups were known, that of "Children of the
(I)
Light." It was descriptive of their attempt to become a spiritual family in life and worship. The ordinary church service generally depends for its major success upon the

ability and spiritual genius of one man, the minister, and not upon the individuals gathered for worship. On the other hand the Quaker held that the "Inner Light" of each contributed to the whole and made a greater Light for all. It was as if the divine within was a unit of power which pooled by all created a greater impress upon each than the personal unit alone could do. This, of course, is a definitely established principle of group experience, but, whilst in many groups it is not generally realized and acted upon, among Quakers the central idea naturally led to an awareness of the operation of this law. For them it was a spiritual supper to which each brought the fruits of the "Inner Light" and so provided a greater variety at the "table of the Lord." As a group of searchers are each inspired by the activity of the whole so the individual Quakers in meeting assembled found inspiration in the presence of all. They acted within as individual cogs moved by the impulse of the whole machine, yet each affording an essential part of the whole. If one took the part of the minister and spoke he was impelled by the same urge that kept another silent.

At the beginning of the history of Quakerism much ardour was shown in the meetings. Humphrey Norton writing

to Fox at the beginning of the year 1656 said that when at Swarthmore he had found many speakers taking part in the meeting there, and also many prayers being said,

"....and such a singing as the like he had not heard and a lightness among them." (1)

Friends, Fox wrote, were to gather in meeting to wait upon the Lord, but this waiting was to be a corporate affair. All through the history of Quakerism the ability to reach spiritual unity in meeting has been a prized factor in its life. The individual aspect of the "Inner Light" makes each member responsible partly for the quality of a church communion. The saying "Ye are members one of another" was applied by this group of Christians.

Fox knew that the majority of Christian people held views akin to his on the ability of the soul to reach God and hold communion with him, but he was unwilling, and in this he differed from them, to confine and limit this spiritual intercourse to the times and places that the established ministry or the Church might arrange. As the spiritual authority of a meeting for worship was not vested in one individual, but in all, they felt they had no need of a minister with a set task and a set form of service. Each friend had a part in the ministry of the Church, because, even in silence, he could contribute

something to others. The inner attitude of each worshipper determines whether he is contributing negatively or positively to the group atmosphere, and on the basis of a right inner attitude he can thus exercise a direct ministry to others. This procedure, Fox saw, called for, not the display of a minister's lone ability, but, the best that was possible in the group and gave opportunity in a properly organized meeting for the appearance of real spiritual leadership. It was not part of Fox's original intention to organize a new religious sect: his purpose was to preach what he considered was "original Christianity", but, like the Methodists at a later time, eventually the grouping of so many adherents together in meetings led to their being organized, and a recognition of those with a "gift in ministry", for the better prosecution of the work.

It may be well to mention just here how this spirit of unity in worship passed over and became the dominating spirit in the business meetings, and has lasted right ~~on~~ ~~down~~ to the present day. It is the direct result of the doctrine of the "Inner Light." In such a business meeting no motions are made and no formal votes taken. The clerk of the meeting brings forward any business to be transacted

and makes its nature clear to the gathering: when this is done discussion is allowed which is free and open. It is the task of the clerk to keep such discussion always to the point under review. If he feels that the meeting has arrived at a "unity of judgment" he proposes a minute that he feels sums up adequately the "sense of the meeting." The meeting is asked if it is satisfied, and if no evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, the minute becomes a record of conclusion and the matter is settled. If the meeting does not concur in the matter it is held over to another meeting. In this way the judgment of a meeting is usually one of the meeting as a whole.

Business.

Even as the personality of a man is seen in the sum total of his reactions to his environment, so the personality of the Quaker was affected in all its outward dealings with the world by the spirit of the "Inner Light." The "Inner Light" not only affected man's spiritual state, but it permeated the whole of his life and brought blessing upon all his endeavours. The doctrine of the "Inner Light" led Fox to a dual conception of the influence of the divine in ordinary life. First of all the earnest believer felt the moral responsibility for dealing fairly

with others. As the recipient of divinity he was called upon to live in the spirit of it, and seeing it was bestowed upon all men he had to deal fairly with them because he was dealing with the Spirit. A sin against a man in business, as elsewhere, was a sin against the "Light." It seems perfectly reasonable to believe that the practise of Quaker morality in business has had a great deal to do with changing the business methods of the West until they no longer resemble the methods of barter that still prevail in many eastern countries. The Quaker of Fox's time broke with the general practise of the shopkeepers of his day, which was that of asking higher prices than they intended ^{were} or [^]willing to accept. By their attitude they established the "one price" custom in trading. But there was another side to the operation of the principle of "Inner Light" in business. Fox held that the laws of nature were in some way in sympathetic unity with the laws of life, and any deviation in the latter caused changes in the former. Naturally enough he regarded the "laws of life" as the laws he had discovered regarding the divine nature of man's spiritual life, so that when one lived according to Fox's doctrine one was indeed blessed of God. He was akin to Mary Baker Eddy in that any

apparent failures of this scheme, and he suffered many, could be attributed not to the failure of God to do his part, but to the action of an evil agent operating in men's lives: in normal circumstances the good Quaker was blessed of God, and the beginning of the eighteenth century appeared to give much evidence to support this view in the progress and success of many Quaker merchants. When a hard drought visited England, and many people were suffering, Fox could write in all seriousness, "So far as the truth was spread, there was rain enough and no drought." Even the hard circumstances that might be brought on by the work of the evil agent in men's minds were mitigated by the operation of this law. Besse, in the first of his volumes, relating some of the "Sufferings"^(I) of these early Quakers tells us of the experience of two fishermen from the Isle of Man. These men were Quakers and one morning, as soon as they came ashore, wet with the night's work, they were arrested and taken to prison. Here they were detained for some days just when the herring season was in full swing. The very night after they were released, so we are told, when they went out to fish they caught as many fish as they were able safely to bring ashore. This success was firmly attributed to the work

1. Joseph Besse: Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers.

of the "Inner Light" preventing any disadvantage resulting as a consequence of the work of their "adversary" - the Light was their "guardian angel."

Marriage.

Fox's view of the relationship of the "Inner Light" to the question of marriage was one that has prevailed among the Quakers until the present time. By many people in his time, as well as in all times, marriage and the marriage ceremony were matters for the civil authorities first of all, and the minister and the service of the Church give a religious sanction and blessing to what has already been accomplished in law. The Roman Catholic view of the matter is different again, recognizing as it does the marriage service as a sacrament and the office of the priest and Church as that of dispensers, not only of blessing, but of the recognition of God vital to the whole transaction and conception. Both views regard the whole matter as being external and objective to the individual, or if there is any subjective reality it only comes into existence by the consent and technique of the outward authorities giving sanction to the external and evident social act. Against both of these views of marriage Fox protested. Marriage, he claimed, was the

work of the Lord only if it was to be by nature a spiritual bond. In his view marriage was something more than a civil and religious recognition of physical mating. It was the joining of two souls in a perfect unity so that in fact the "two souls became one," and this unity was arrived at as the result of the work of the "Inner Light" within. Marriage being the outward consummation of something which has already taken place within, then the office of the magistrates and priests is totally different from that usually assumed: they were to be present at the ceremony, which in the Quakers was of a deliberative nature and was carried forward to its conclusion by the impulse of the contracting parties, only as witnesses to the fact and not in any way having a determining part in it. The chief authority in a wedding service was the "Inner Light" and Fox's own matrimonial experience with Margaret Fell was in full accord with his own views concerning this matter.

Dress and Speech.

As the body of the individual partakes of the nature of a temple because it shelters something of the divine within, so the clothes of the individual come under the influence of the "Inner Light." Clothes and

possessions, for the early Quaker, were indeed extensions of personality. When an individual shows evil without in the manner of dress or speech it is because of evil within, but when an individual comes to a recognition of the true nature of that within, then the outward will conform to it. Good and evil are often expressed in the external things of an individual's life. Fox said:-⁽¹⁾

" I went back to Nottinghamshire, and there the Lord showed me that the natures of those things which were hurtful without, were within in the hearts and minds of wicked men."

(2)

He also wrote:-

" I saw plainly, that when many people talked of God and of Christ, etc. the serpent spoke in them; but this was hard to be borne."

The reality of any belief for Fox was asserted in the lives and actions of people, and even the mode of dress could be made to bear witness to one's faith. The weakness of much of this reasoning of Fox and his contemporaries was never realized by large bodies of their supporters. They aimed at simplicity, not as an attitude of the inner life, but, in external things like those of dress and speech. It was never realized that the simple garb of one generation might become a sign of pride in another. Even

1. Journal: vol.i: p.19.

2. ibid vol.i: p.21.

in the use of "thee" and "thou" Fox failed to recognize that in the development of language common usage, very often, determines what is grammatical form. Often the adoption of the unusual in dress and speech is more likely to create a spirit of pride and aloofness -this is a matter of compensation - than the ordinary forms of normal people. Fox thought that the special revelation of God in the human heart called for a different mode, or modes, of expression than that practised by the people who had not turned to the "Inner Light," and knew not "God in their hearts." It is always the spirit back of an idea that counts and it is probable that, although later ideas concerning "thee" and "thou" and the matter of manners and dress partook of the nature of orthodoxy and tradition, Fox was sincere in believing these things were evident signs of a people "peculiar to God," However, "Come ye out and be ye separate" is not a command to alienate oneself from the body of mankind by being peculiar. At the beginning what later became the distinctive dress of the Quakers was the ordinary style of the day without any of the superfluous additions adopted by the vain and the rich.

But when Fox called upon his followers not to take oaths or swear he was guided by a surer idea and a more

vital application of his main principle. The man who publicly confesses his acceptance of an unfailing "Inner Light" should give evidence of its continuing moral influence in his outward conduct. The unvarying and constant nature of that which is within conditions, if it is unfettered in its effect, the outward life; between the outer and the inner life there should be an established harmony. The ordinary conversation should be in keeping with the nature of this "inward monitor," and no need arise for implementing the purpose of speech by the use of oaths. Thus only by refusing to take oaths can he firmly testify to the truth of his own words. If the taking of an oath makes a man's word more binding upon him, then it follows that in ordinary conversation, in the normal business transactions, his word cannot be fully and implicitly trusted. So the Friend believes that he bears testimony to the nature of the Light by the veracity of his conversation, and he will not give any cause for its being questioned by the occasional use of oaths. William Penn said, "We dare not swear, because we dare not lie." The testimony of Fox to the dynamic and controlling power of the "Inner Light," with the thousands who also bore similar testimony, has established the whole movement in the eyes of the world as one composed of people whose word can be trusted, and an affirmation by a Quaker can be accepted in any court with as much certainty as sworn evidence.

WAR.

Fox, and the friends in general, never stood for a principle divorced from life's problems. He held that the acceptance of the "Inner Light" could not be really held apart from certain practises and a defined way of life. It is this view that is the secret of Fox's attitude towards war. His repugnance of war did not arise from a conviction that the injury of life was in itself wrong, but from the belief that war brought into opposition those who should be united on the basis of a common inner possession of "something of God." He felt that the pacifist attitude would appeal to the latent good in man and make more possible a recognition by him of the "Inner Light," while on the other hand war tended to confirm the evil propensities of man. Fox was really interested in people's well-being; he had sympathy for all who had to carry the heavy burdens. As he came to a greater realization and clearer understanding of the "Inner Light" the more he felt the tragedy of the results of war, seen in the lives that were intended to be divine crushed and spoiled. Fox believed that the "Inner Light" tended to produce Christlike characters; it was a "nisis" towards the Christ ideal, and he could not reconcile the military office with the character of a "son of God." That some of the early leaders felt that even soldiers were aware

of the "Inner Light", and that they were aware of the type of conduct which that knowledge demanded, is attested to by a letter Burrough sent to ⁽¹⁾ "...all the poor and desolate soldiers of the lowest rank, who are scattered up and down this desolate land of Ireland" in which he said:-

" This Light reproves you in secret of violence....
and it will teach you not to make war, but to
preserve peace in the earth."

The Quaker view regarding war, introduced by Fox, gained ground rapidly, for in 1656, nine years after Fox had commenced preaching, many men in the army of General Monck, in Scotland, left because of their Quaker views. With the acceptance of the doctrine of Fox they felt that they could no longer remain in such a position and their resultant behaviour led either to their dismissal or their leaving the army. We have many records of early Quakers changing their convictions and conduct regarding the profession of soldier or sailor. In the days of the Press gang a man's "convincement" of the Quaker principles often led to much suffering. ⁽²⁾ This testimony against war on the basis of man's intrinsic divine nature has remained one of the outstanding and uniform witnesses of Quakerism to the rest of mankind.

1. Braithwaite: Beginnings of Quakerism; p.217

2. In this connection see William Hodgson: Select Historical Memoirs of the Religious Society of Friends.

Government.

If the "Inner Light" leads to a recognition of the worth of the individual and makes of the nations of the world a divine democracy with an aristocracy based only upon spiritual perceptions and qualities, it also demands justice in one's dealings with others as authorities set over them. For Fox there is always a practical application of the doctrine for the peculiar circumstances of the individual. "Faith without works is dead" is true in the realm of mysticism just as anywhere else. Writing to the Governor of Rhode Island Fox said:-

" Mind that of God within you, stand for the good of your people. Take off all oppression; and set up justice over all."

Good government, from the standpoint of Fox, is not the white man's privilege, but his responsibility towards others. In America the early Quakers gave token of their firm adherence to this principle in their dealings with the Indians. Why? Because the Indian was possessed of the "Inner Light". Justice, full justice, can only be dispensed by those recognizing the "Inner Light" in themselves. The "Inner Light" is a divinely given capacity for judgment. The Quaker should carry his problems and difficulties only before men professing and holding to the validity of this

belief - that is before the Quaker group. Fox set forth
(1)
his view unmistakably in the following words:-

" It is thus clear that the saints have a judgment given them of Christ, by his power and spirit, light and wisdom, to judge the world, and not to carry their matters before the unjust, but to judge of them amongst themselves; and if they carry them before the unjust, they show their unworthiness of the saints' judgment."

The government then is for the rule of those incapable of guiding their own lives by an application of the wisdom of God from within, and the ideal ruler is one who recognizes this "Inner Light," and by his example helps others to find it. The total realization and acceptance by the people would result in a civilization without external government, guided by the Law within, and akin to the pre-Fall estate of our first parents.

Conclusion

We have traced the conceptions of the doctrine of the "Inner Light" on the basis of Fox's Journal, and we have now looked at many facets of his belief concerning it: we have noticed some of the implications of his faith in daily living, but above all we should remember that his great enthusiasm for this doctrine was not based upon the fact that he had evolved a complete and harmonious scheme of theology which was unified, for him, by a single

dominant idea, and was without contradiction - it was far from that - but that this man had had a great and ennobling experience which had changed the trend of his life, given tranquillity of spirit, and sent him forth with a passion to win men, not only to an acceptance of the doctrine of the "Inner Light", but to the enjoyment and appreciation of the same inner life and experience. We cannot close this study of Fox any better than again quoting the words in which he tells us how this fundamental (1) and far-reaching experience came to him. He wrote:-

" When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do; then, O! then I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition;' and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give him all the glory; for all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief, as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have pre-eminence, who enlightens, and gives grace, and faith, and power. Thus when God doth work, who shall hinder it? and this I knew experimentally."

CHAPTER THREE

The conceptions of Barclay, Penington and Penn - the first Quaker scholastics.

In the first years of Quakerism's expansion there was a predominating type to be observed among its adherents. Whether the lack of culture and refinement in Fox determined, for a long time, the type of person attracted by his message it is difficult to say. True it is, from the record of his Journal, that many of the country gentry were favourably impressed, but whether they became allied directly in equal proportion as other groups is doubtful.

(1)

Penn has described them thus:-

" The simplicity of their behaviour, the generality of their condition, as being poor men and illiterate."

" Therefore hath God laid aside the wise and learned, and the disputers of this world, and hath chosen a few despicable and unlearned instruments...."

"he hath raised up a few despicable and illiterate men, and for the most part mechanics."

Much of the contemporary description we have is of groups of very ordinary folk giving forth the usual evidences that accompany such a revival of religion: now they have alternating moods of over-activity, when their enthusiasm knows no bounds, and then are, indeed, "the quiet in the land." In the "Weekly Intelligencer" of Feb.27th., 1654 we have this account of some Quakers visiting
(2)
London:-

" They seem for the most part to be perfect objects

1. Robert Barclay: An Apology for the true Christian Divinity:
(The copy issued by Raylton & Hinde, London 1736) pp.vi;x;92
2. Mabel Brailsford: A Quaker from Cromwell's Army, etc: p.83

" of humility and repentance, their aspect as demure as their Habit, so that if they be Lights, they are like Lights in a dark Lantern melancholy without, but burning and shining within."

These first adherents were brave men, however, and while the lack of culture in some kept many others from joining, others hesitated because of their ^{own} cowardice: these early Friends never met surreptitiously; they were open in their meetings and, as the many cast into prison testified, readily suffered the consequences. Penn, in an address to the King, said:-
(2)

"....that while other groups of dissenters sought refuge in secret places, they always worshipped in places known to the public and were never surprised in any unknown place of meeting."

But while acknowledging the bravery and enthusiasm which marked the Quakerism of this early period, we know that it was labouring under the burden of extravagance in public denunciation and declamation on the one hand, and on the other what has been termed " the bewildering mass
(1)
of books and pamphlets." From the press there poured forth a stream of literature which, while providing a channel for the dissipation of much exuberance of enthusiasm, in its "disregard of style and grammar, if not in the
(1)
reiteration and incoherence..." was not likely to impress those capable of sustained thought on the problems that

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1. T. Edmund Harvey: The Rise of the Quakers; p.51.
 2. Barclay's Apology: see preface.

the doctrine of the "Inner Light" involved. It is not difficult to understand how unlettered and often untutored men produced such incoherency. A sincere adherence to the "Inner Light" led, as was natural, to much introspection and meditation. The central idea of that communing with oneself would become a focal point, and would, in a measure, enable the individual to realize his personality in a new and unusual way: this concentration, in such a subjective manner, would lead to definite religious experience, but because of its subjective content it would not lend itself to verbal description. The subject of the experience would find, unconsciously perhaps, refuge in a symbolic use of words. In that mood he would write his books and pamphlets, and then wonder why they did not win others^{who read them} to a like experience. It is traceable back, as we often see, to the ineffable quality of mystical experience and resulted in the use of words like Light, Truth, Seed, etc., to describe something personal and subjective in religious experience. The early Quaker sought to translate everything into terms of inner experience and so emotion played a more important part than intellect. There was little, if any, ability or desire to formulate a theological system, but their message had to be formulated and given the authority of

a reasoned system if it was to live beyond the time of the first leaders.

It was just at this point that Quakerism received the support and intelligent co-operation of three men who, not only gave a touch of social respectability to the whole movement, but, cast the message into forms that would and could survive. These three men have been described as, ⁽¹⁾ "The courtly Penn, the refined Penington, the scholarly Barclay..." They were men who because of their education and background asked the questions concerning what the "Inner Light" really was and how it was related to God and the historical person of Christ. The resultant books, expressing their considered views, came to have a very determinative influence upon the development of Quakerism. With the advent of such men reason was given a fuller opportunity in the service of "the truth."

The most important of this trio was Robert Barclay, and the one book that more than any other was to survive and become a theological authority was one from his pen - the renowned Apology. It is very evident from a perusal of this book that he was a man of very wide learning and that he had a mastery of ancient and early Christian

1. John W. Rowntree: Essays and Addresses; p.43.

authorities at his command. This book became the theological standard of Quakerism for over 200 years. For many years, an applicant for membership of the Society was asked if he had read ^{the Apology} and approved of its positions. Barclay had a strict Calvinistic upbringing and his Apology was written from that background; one writer has gone as far as to say:-
(1)

" His work might almost be described as an attempt to find room for the message of George Fox within the framework of the theology of John Calvin."

Many of the orthodox theological positions like that of the Fall and Human Depravity he accepted as a basis from which to begin, but he moved on to the position that man has been endowed with a supernatural capacity, a divine illumination, by which he can enter into communion with God. He acknowledges the operations of reason and conscience, but for him the "Inner Light" is on a higher and more authoritative plane. The book is written in a logical fashion and enables the reader to have a definite and clear understanding of what was entailed in the author's acceptance and defence of the doctrine of the "Inner Light."

The second member of this group was Isaac Penington. His father was an outstanding man during the Commonwealth period; he was a member of the Long Parliament and in 1638

High Sheriff of London. For many years Isaac had been uncertain in his religious opinions: for a time he was connected with an Independent congregation. With his wife, the widow of Sir William Springett, the Puritan commander, he attended a Quaker meeting in 1658 where he was, to use a Quaker word, convinced. Many of the early Quakers travelled from place to place and thus propagated the message, but Penington spent the major portion of the time he gave to Quaker service, in writing. His works, which were many, rendered distinct help in spreading the influence of the doctrines of Quakerism, but did not display the acute perceptive powers of Barclay; there is not the orderly approach and treatment of problems that one finds in the apologist, and often there is a discursiveness, a lack of continuity, a repetition, that produces a dullness in the whole. Penington's position was that of Fox that the Quaker had no new message to bring, but that it was a return to the primitive message of Christianity. On this basis he claimed to be as orthodox as any. He was not a systematic thinker who could realise that often elements in the old could be combined in such a way that the resultant doctrine was essentially new.

The other member of this group, one with an equally distinguished social background, was William Penn, the

son of Admiral Penn, who later became the owner and founder of the State of Pennsylvania. He was a man of a more practical turn of mind. His most important writing, from the standpoint of influence and circulation, was his "No Cross, no Crown," although he wrote many other tracts in defence of the Quaker position. Of this book (1) one Quaker historian has said:-

" The book developed into a general Apologia for Quakerism on the side of its practise, as Barclay's work.....was on the side of its theory."

His writing style is more free from the evidences of scholastic pursuit than either that of Barclay or Penington; it is evidently written with an idea of securing popular interest and is "expansive, hortatory and unrestrained."

The messages that these three men gave to their time, and the type of people who received them, were formative conditions which in a large measure determined the character of Quakerism as a definitely continuing organized religious movement. To understand what the views of these men were is to be able to appreciate in which direction and form the message of Fox was being influenced.

The message of Fox was in opposition to much of the current theological opinion, in that he claimed that God had endowed every man with a measure of divine immanence

I. John W. Graham: The Faith of a Quaker; p.127.

which had the power of saving the individual. From that general position the early apologists did not move.

Barclay again and again uses the expression "all men" to indicate how universal is the bestowal of this "Inner Light". The individual did not have to wait for someone to give incentive to the inactive and latent force - it was always capable by itself of leading a man aright; neither did he require to hear the gospel of Jesus preached. But the inner state of spiritual awareness was an intermittent one so that the individual needed to take advantage of the time when he was aware of its operation.

(1)

Barclay wrote:-

" That God.....hath given to everyman....of whatsoever nation, country, or place, a certain day or time of visitation: during which day or time it is possible for them to be saved...."

It might be that that time could be induced, but it became necessary to create a state of inner quiescence - a condition in which the ordinary intellectual and mental functions were in abeyance, "So that the first step is not by man's working, but by his not contrary working." (2) One readily perceives that in a statement such as that there is a basis upon which the Quietist could base his passiveness. The final responsibility for the inshining of the "Light"

the operation of this latent spiritual force, was with God. Barclay, apparently, did not care to elevate man to the position where he could himself inaugurate the process whereby he might be finally saved. Man was possessed of an abiding potential inner life, but God reserved for himself the power of initiating its activity. Fox did not place the responsibility so definitely upon God, he recognized that man's "extremity is God's opportunity." In answer to the query of when this quiescent life becomes active Barclay replies:-

".....by this day and time of visitation....we do not understand the whole time of every man's life....but such a season at least as sufficiently exonerateth God of every man's condemnation..... So that many men may outlive this day after which there may be no possibility of salvation." (1)

".....and this Light enlightened the hearts of all for a time....." (2)

".....but this light and seed of God in man he cannot move or stir up when he pleased; but it moves, blows, and strives with man, as the Lord seeth meet." (3)

So, for Barclay, there are seasons in the weather of the soul for which a man must wait - he can do nothing to bring them, he can only prepare to take advantage of them.

The final state of salvation is achieved by the operation of a divine gift from God which is "a measure

of the light of his own Son, a measure of Grace, or a measure of the Spirit, which the Scripture expresses by several names." ⁽¹⁾ This gift, as we have already suggested, was not granted ^{only} to that selected group which has heard the gospel that Jesus preached, but was as widely given as life itself.

" For to speak properly, the gospel is this inward power and life which preaches glad tidings in the hearts of all men...and therefore is said to be preached to every creature under heaven." (2)

Though Barclay gave much thought to the proofs necessary to establish the view that all men everywhere had received this gift, he was yet faced with what appeared to be the privileged position of some in relation thereto. If all matters of spiritual importance were derivatives of the "Light's" working, then every man had an equal opportunity of creating for himself a character and work of unusual significance, but the ordinary facts of experience and knowledge belie such an idea of uniform relationship with God. Barclay rejected the Calvinistic theory of total depravity and so saved, from his standpoint, the lowest strata of mankind from an unjust damnation, but he introduced some slight aspect of the doctrine of predestination or divine selection to account for something

1. Apology: p.93.
2. ibid

or the inequalities of spiritual condition; he postulated a divine affection selective in its operation. We read:- (1)

" So we do not deny, but that in a special manner he works in some, in whom grace so prevails, that they necessarily obtain salvation; neither doth God suffer them to resist. For it were absurd to say that God had not far otherwise extended himself towards the Virgin Mary and the apostle Paul, than towards many others; neither can we affirm, that God equally loved the beloved disciple John and Judas the traitor. "

Such an interpretation of the differing statuses of spiritual leaders implied that God could and did so operate against the forces of the individual will and condition that he created unique men and women. Those who imputed a unique divine character to James Naylor were only, in his case, carrying out to the extreme the implications of the apologist's view which had placed Jesus in the category of spiritually unique men.

Penington made the bestowal of the Light co-terminous with the extent of God's love, and his desire for the salvation of all men, but he was at one with Barclay in leaving the time of its appearance in the hands of God. To use words current at the time, man's soul was a lantern in which the light was always burning, but the opening of it for the shining forth of the light to dispel inner darkness was not in the power of man as the possessor of the lantern: it was controlled by God who had given the light. We read:- (2)

1. Apology: p.106.

2. The Works of ...Isaac Penington, etc.: vol. iv: p.110.

(The edition used is that of 1784, published in London by James Phillips.)

" Quest:7, When doth the light of Christ's Spirit shine in the darkness of man's heart?

Answ: When, as God pleaseth. For the Light is his, and he causeth it to shine (in the hearts of the sons and daughters of men) according to his pleasure...."

But once one has had the experience of knowing the light and its operation, a progressive development of its power and place in the life is possible. The final condition is one of permanency. However, Penington, as Barclay did, had to face the problem of why it was a fairly simple matter for some to yield to such an influence, and for others no finally satisfying experience seemed possible. He met it by making the soul the ground of two opposing forces and making the condition of the "Inner Light" dependent on the state of that opposition. He expressed this dualism thus:- (I)

" How comes this way to be hid from some that desire after the Lord, and to know his truth as it is in Jesus?

Answ: From the subtilty of the enemy, who blinds the eye which alone can see, and stops the ear which alone can hear, and hardens the heart which alone can understand; and hath devices, snares, and baits, and false reasonings from scriptures, and from experiences, which anyone that hearkens unto, and is entangled and ensnared in, is his captive....."

Penn commenced his approach to the question of how wide was the distribution of the "Inner Light" by reference to the book of Genesis, and reasoned, on the basis of

the scriptural assertion, that God "made man in his own
 (1)
 image." He said:-

" That if man was made in God's image; then,
 because God is light, Adam must necessarily have
 had the divine light in him."

It was the possession of the Light which gave Adam the moral sensibility which resulted in his awareness of the wrong he had committed, and the fact that all men everywhere have this same consciousness of wrong, in a more or less degree, was taken as witnessing to the universal existence, commencing with Adam, of the "Inner Light." That all men have had some sense of this universal gift Penn sought to prove by copious quotation from the Greek philosophers, ancient authorities, Church Fathers, and many others. He did, however, believe that there were varying conditions imposed upon the operation of the Light. These were imposed by God. For instance, the advent of Jesus in the flesh gave new character to the Light so that those living before the time of Jesus, or without knowledge of him, were not
 (2)
 in such a privileged position as the Christians. We read:-

" For this let all know, that far greater were the privileges that both Jew and Christian were blessed with, than those of the ancient Gentiles. God gave the Jews what the Gentiles had; but he was not pleased to endow the Gentiles with all that he freely bestowed upon the Jews: yet that he gave them what was sufficient for godliness is altogether as certain....."

Such a limited gift of the spirit, as was possible without the advantages accruing from the Christian revelation, was in the nature of "a convincer and reprover of sin" and had the power of delivering men from the "spirit of iniquity." Penn declared that the spiritual condition of a man who gave himself up to the control of this spiritual power was akin to that which results from salvation. Whenever men have felt that immanent power to be insufficient or negative it has been because of their unwillingness to yield to it full authority over their lives. Within the conditions of time and place this "Light" has been the source of truth; it was that which was the fundamental reason for the Greek's quest of truth; it was that which always drives men to seek reasons for their experience. God has suited the dispensation to the conditions of the people, but it is no discharge from the obligations which spiritual capacity brings to claim that one's own portion has been a limited one. The manner in which one has taken advantage of what one has received will form the basis of God's judgment. Because of the immature spiritual condition of the Jews God could not make the approach that the gospel Jesus declared made to later generations, but the truth of that appeal was expressed in a more attractive form, for the Jews, in "types" (1)

and prophecies."

Even as Barclay gave God the final authority for inaugurating spiritual experience, and Penington left the inshining of the Light to God's pleasure, so Penn said that the soul of man was incapable of sensing God, worshipping God, unless God himself first came into man's life. There is no capacity native to man by which he is enabled to seek and worship God. If man "is restless till he rests in God" it is because something of God is agitating his inner self; remove that divinely induced discontent and man would become ignorant and unaware of a sense of incompleteness. Human nature is of such a character that it possesses a possibility and potentiality for spiritual progress, but it does not lead to an awareness of God, but only to a condition receptive to God.

(I)

Penn wrote:-

" The soul of man, however lively in other things, is dead to God, till he breathe the spirit of life into it: it cannot live to Him, much less worship Him, without it."

And in seeking the state of receptiveness we are called upon, and here the three scholastics are again in general agreement, to seek to induce a passive state of mind and spirit; nothing from the world or external experience,

I. William Penn: No Cross, No Crown: p.62.

nothing from the content of the mind, must be allowed to interpose itself upon the contemplation of the seeker, so that whatever arises from the attention shall be spontaneous in appearance because it comes from a region beyond the ordinary psychic controls - in fact directly from God himself. The instruction is given that when (I) this primary condition of communication is to be induced:-

"thou must not think thy own thoughts, nor speak thy own words.....but be sequestered from all the confused imaginations that are apt to throng and press upon the mind....."

" wherefore stand still in thy mind, wait to feel something that is divine, to prepare and dispose thee to worship God truly and acceptably."

These first Quaker writers had no philosophical conceptions of an immanent Deity whose essential being was everywhere to be found, whose whole self was in a totality of things. Their thought never went beyond the idea of a transcendent God who because of his goodness visited his people, and the wonder of whose character was thus to be seen in his ability to be everywhere at once. Allied to this they were constantly faced by Christological problems, so that their attempts at giving satisfactory explanations of the relationships subsisting between the "Inner Light" and the

Trinity were often confused. Barclay tried to solve something of this problem of relationships by postulating that the "Inner Light" was not itself a divine emanation, but was the medium of spiritual life. God was the reservoir of spiritual life and the "Inner Light" was the channel through which such life could flow if conditions were propitious and suitable. All were provided with such means of communication with the central cosmic source of life, but not all availed themselves of it. The personal will of man was the factor which usually determined the degree of that life's incoming. There is spiritual life available to man through the medium of his own inner nature, but its reception is conditioned by two factors; one, that the will be exercised aright, and, two, that God himself is willing. The incoming of spiritual life was sometimes interrupted by a willed inactivity on God's part, and, again, sometimes purposely increased. Barclay summed (I) up his position thus:-

"By this seed, grace, and word of God, and light, wherewith we say every man is enlightened.....we understand not the proper essence and nature of God precisely taken, which is not divisible into parts and measures.....but we understand a

" spiritual, heavenly, and invisible principle,
in which God as Father, Son, and Spirit dwells;
a measure of which divine and glorious life is in
all men as a seed, which of its own nature draws,
invites, and inclines to God; and this we call
'vehiculum Dei...."

Penington did not enter so deeply into such questions;
he was content to look upon this Light as God's "own
candle" by which he searches the hearts of men. It is not
a natural endowment of man, but given by God, and, being
(1)
of God it:-

"cannot err; for God is pure, and that which
comes immediately from him cannot but be pure..."

Penn, on the other hand, did not even think it
necessary to give any other name than that which was current
(2)
among all Christians. He said:-

" I had the knowledge of religion from a principle
in myself.....,"

but that which was thus within him as the medium for the
(3)
discovery of religious truth was:-

"God's holy Spirit, placed in thy inmost parts...,"
(4)
and to mind which he said:-

" Quench not the Holy Spirit in yourselves."

The scholastics had difficulty in explaining the
relationship between the "Inner Light" and God, but they
had a far more troublesome problem in coming to a decision

1. Penington's Works: vol.ii: p.8.

2. Penn's works: p.cviii. 3. ibid p.42. 4. No Cross, No Crown
p.202.

regarding that between Christ and the Light. The true character of the Light had to be akin to one aspect of the Trinity or they would have been guilty of creating a fourth partition of the Godhead, which would have led to greater confusion. They believed that there was a very close connection between the "Inner Light" and the historic person of Christ, and found support for this idea in their interpretation of the prologue of John's gospel. The Light in them was of Christ, but often they were confused in their thinking by the difficulty of maintaining the proper relationship between the Light of Christ within and the Christ of history. Also perforce, they had to ask themselves why, if Christ was the Logos from the beginning, in all men from Adam downwards, and that resident divinity could lead to salvation, even if it were a limited one in its influence on the carnal life, was it necessary for the Christ to be incarnate in Jesus?

We have already noticed in passing that in the attempt to explain spiritual differences an idea of divine selection had been employed in Barclay's treatment of the cases of the Virgin and St. Paul. Now, in connection with the Christological questions, an idea was given currency that the divine Logos had been incarnated in a specially prepared body, which was but the vehicle for its

earthly expression and manifestation, in a manner akin to that in which the Light inhabited man. This reduced the Incarnation to an experience akin to what was in differing degree possible to all men.

The philosophical dualism of the day, though bristling with its own problems, nevertheless, provided them with a background against which to interpret the dualistic nature of man's experience, based upon the acceptance of an indwelling Christ to which human nature was not entirely subordinate. This nature was, by the accepted doctrine of total depravity, intrinsically different from that which, though operating within, was supernatural and divine.

Barclay was not able to differentiate between what might have been an emanation of spiritual influence and Christ: he confused Christ as the Light and the Light as from Christ. He wrote in answer to the question of whether Christ was in all men or not the following:-

" And for as much as Christ is called that Light that enlightens everyman, the light of the world, therefore the light is taken for Christ who truly is the fountain of light, and hath its habitation in it for ever. Thus the light of Christ is sometimes called Christ, i.e., that in which Christ is, and from which he is never separated."

But even though he has stated his difficulties thus clearly he, nevertheless, proceeds to indicate that he believes that

1. Apology: p.101
2. ibid p.93.

by a reception of the Light a man becomes a sharer within of the sufferings, partaker of the resurrection, and a receiver of the salvation of Jesus.

Penington saw that only by a miraculous and incomprehensible dispensation could a man receive from Jesus, what was in fact Jesus in his entirety. He met the problem by the conception that the "Inner Light" while intrinsically the same as the universal Christ, was nevertheless, in some measure distinct from it. The Light is the agent of Christ and through it Christ manifests himself to the recipient of it. It is as if Christ were a never diminishing source of spiritual dynamic; what he gave forth partook of all the essential attributes of his character, but was not indeed he. Our subject's own words
(I)
were:-

" And if any man will receive Christ, he must receive that from Christ wherein he manifests himself. There is a difference between the light which enlighteneth (the fullness of light, which giveth the measure of light, the measure of anointing to us) and the measure or proportion which is given; the one is Christ himself, the other is his gift; yet his gift is of the same nature with himself, and leavens those that receive it, and abide in it, into the same nature: so that not only the gift is one with him, but also are one with him in the gift."

Penington recognizing that if Jesus were of true

humanity then the Light would take some character from that human-divine association, met the difficulty of attributing any natural quality to it by saying that it did not partake of any of the "nature of corrupt Adam." The eternal Christ was an unchanging reality - as such he was not amenable to any progressive changes, for he was in a state of spiritual perfection for he was of the essential character of God himself, and the Light was of the same character - "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Penn gave a great deal of thought and expression to this facet of the question, and he very closely followed the other writers of his time, and though he used different symbols to convey his thought his meaning was much the same. To him, God and Christ, though in thought distinguished, were essentially the same, and Christ partook of the divine quality of light. In thus expressing himself Penn fell back, as he usually did, on scriptural expression. Christ was best represented by the sun of the physical world, and from him radiated beams of light which, not only dispelled the darkness, but also exerted certain influences. We read:- (2)

" The Light in us, as we are subject to it,
and led by it, administers an holy power...."

The condition of the recipient of these influences, emanating

from the eternal Christ, often determined their extent and character. But Christ, as the eternal Logos, being present in mankind from the beginning, suffered the evil of that period of time. When his spirit suffered in the Crucifixion it could rightly be said that he carried "the sins of the whole world" because he had hitherto endured the universal sin of mankind. Adam, by refusing at the very beginning to obey the "Inner Light" gave an impetus to those forces of human nature which constantly through the years placed the "Inner Light" under disadvantages. The physical crucifixion of Jesus, as an external event in time, did not exercise a retroactive influence, but because of mankind's continuous rejection of the Light it could be said that the Light suffered the experience of crucifixion from the very beginning.

But Penn is in troubled waters when he comes to the relationship existing between the manifestation in the flesh and the Light of all time. For him Christ's appearance was of two different types. One a pre-incarnation manifestation, and the other an incarnation and post-incarnation one. To the man whose time relationship was of the former, to know Christ as the "Inner Light" was to know him as was then fully possible, but to one whose time connection was the latter it became necessary, if one was to take advantage of every spiritual possibility, to know

both the "Inner Light" of all time and the Christ who appeared in the flesh. We must not confuse what was possible before the Incarnation with what became possible after it. This would account for the difficulty of prophesying the advent of Jesus when already the "Inner Light" was universally bestowed. Much of the problem was often that of language, the difficulty of expressing clearly the difference in character between the eternal spiritual factor in man's experience of God, and the relationship of that with the facts of the Incarnation. Often the name Christ was used indiscriminately of the two aspects of the question at issue. Although Penn does not explicitly state it he implies that the gift of the "Inner Light" before Jesus Christ's appearance was in the nature of an emanation from a more or less indistinct centre of divine power, but that in Jesus Christ all the influence represented in those emanations and the power resident in the original source was gathered together and given clearer definition and purpose.

Penn following his explanation of the eternal nature of the divine in Jesus still had to explain the facts allied to the human side of the Christ's manifestation. He appears to have regarded the pre-existent Logos and

the incarnate Christ as being of the same spiritual value because they were essentially the same. He wrote:-⁽¹⁾

"it doth clearly follow that Christ was Christ before that outward appearance; and consequently it could not be a more excellent and free manifestation of his truth....."

In that the intrinsic spiritual nature of Jesus and the pre-existent divine life, which had before manifested itself in the spiritual potentialities of mankind, were the same, the physical life of Jesus was of secondary importance - a concession to the nature and frailty of mankind. Being subordinate to the essential spiritual being, of which it was but the housing, it was within the power of the latter to yield it up to become crucified through the evil will of mankind. In this sense it became in God's sight a "most precious offering.....and drew God's love the more eminently unto mankind."⁽²⁾

One or two excerpts from Penn will make his position on this matter fairly clear. He writes:-

" Yet, as it was the divine power that gave them weight in that great work, so was it the divine life in him (Christ) which made that holy manhood what it was; and therefore ought we, chiefly, to appropriate the salvation to Christ as the Word-God, and to the holy manhood but secondarily and instrumentally; I mean, as it was a chosen instrument or vessel, in and by which God declared the blessed glad tidings of love...." ⁽³⁾

"yet we reverently confess the holy manhood was instrumentally a Saviour, as prepared and chosen for the work that Christ, the Word-God, had then to do in it...." (1)

"he (Jesus) cheerfully offered up his bodily life, to recommend and ratify his love for the remission of sin..." (2)

Barclay, we noted, was unwilling to give the natural man any absolute power by which he might himself initiate a process tending to salvation, and in furtherance of this conception he did not allow an approximation of value or substance between the faculties of man and their products and the "Inner Light." He said that the Light "wholly excludes the natural man from having any place or portion in his own salvation.." But in making a total separation between the "Inner Light" and any organ of human perception and cognition, he created the problem of how across such a chasm an influence could be extended that would affect the natural man. If the "Inner Light", because of its essential nature, is thus completely precluded from partaking of the life of man, and does not participate in his rational being, the question of its value for the normal life of man arises. If it is of such a totally other nature its presence in man creates an unbridgable division in the realm of his inner life. On the basis of this interpretation the "Inner Light" became a faculty given to mankind whereby

he secured the possibility of developing a spiritual condition confined to one aspect of the life alone. Barclay was never able, apparently, to see the possibility of God using, even as he had created, the ordinary abilities of man as the media for a communication of his spirit. So man was to be passive; he was not to allow any "creaturely activity" to interpose itself between the Light and its insuining in man. Eventually this led to the view that only those experiences which appeared to have arisen apart from any operation of the reason, to have come from man's subliminal self, were to be regarded as having spiritual significance. This was a view which later on had a great influence upon Quaker thought. Barclay wrote thus:-

"we understand not this divine principle to be any part of man's nature, nor yet to be any relics of any good which Adam lost by his fall, in that we make it a distinct separate thing from man's soul, and all the faculties of it.for we certainly know that this light of which we speak is not only distinct, but of a different nature from the soul of man, and its faculties."

For Penn the evident moral quality of man's nature, the intermittent quality of his moral yearnings, did not arise from any separation between carnal life and spiritual inwardness, which was incapable of harmony because opposed substantially, but arose because the carnal life of man

was the seat of an evil principle which was his inheritance from our first parents. The "Inner Light" was located in the spiritual life of man, and he called it the "just principle in your own conscience,"⁽¹⁾ making the conscience part of the spiritual life which was in constant opposition to the inherited evil principle.

Penn held that the moral sensitiveness which man could experience was one effect of the Light within, and in writing of the "principle in the conscience" he did not differentiate between conscience and the Light. That principle had application to every phase of life, and could therefore exercise judgment in all realms of human activity. It was believed that all men had a measure of moral sensibility, and that its degree depended upon one's sensitiveness to the Light, and that the universality of moral awareness was one more evidence of the possession by all men of the Light.

Barclay, on the other hand, made a decided difference between conscience and the Light within; conscience, he said, was a product of the faculties inherent in man's nature, and was therefore open to all the corrupting influences of his earthly environment. The fact that conscience was not an unchanging unalterable entity within was the strongest evidence that it had no connection with the steadfast immutable principle called the "Inner Light." The conscience was a natural faculty; the "Inner Light"

an added supernatural potentiality. The conception of conscience, which Barclay held, was that of a moral sensitiveness which depended for its degree of enlightenment on the state of man's knowledge. If that knowledge were motivated by a personal bias, a wrong conception, misinformation, by any of the liabilities of intellectual freedom, it would, in that measure, influence the sensitiveness of the conscience. In offending conscience a man is only violating a sense of values which has developed within the limited environment of the intellectual and experiential manifold of his own life: such a conscience does not receive any authoritative values from beyond the borders of man's psychic self. The activity of such a moral sensitiveness, when wrongly motivated, may lead to conflict between itself and the "Inner Light." The latter, however, when received and recognized can make the necessary readjustments in the (I) operation of the conscience. Our subject wrote:-

"....for conscience follows the judgment, doth not inform it: but this light, as it is received, removes the blindness of the judgment, opens the understanding, and rectifies both the judgment and conscience."

Penington followed Barclay very closely in this matter, and in reply to the question "How is man converted?" replied "By the operation of the Light and power of God upon

(1)
 his conscience." The conscience was in operation before the felt and acknowledged operation of the "Inner Light," but its contribution to man's moral and spiritual growth was conditioned by its being vulnerable to the effects of "selfish reasonings and dark imaginations.." Because it was thus closely connected with the carnal interests, its operation was often conditioned by the influences exerted by the evil propensities which man inherited as a consequence of Adam's moral delinquency. Penington, by seeking to separate conscience from the Light, left the ordinary person with the problem of clearly differentiating between them. It was easy to formulate the difference intellectually, but in experience it was another matter. Barclay made Light and conscience two distinct entities with little interaction, but Penington made the one (2) the medium for the other. We read:-

" That this light convincing of sin, shineth in every conscience."

He realized the difficulty, but was unable to offer any guidance whereby one might know whether it was the Light or the conscience that one was following. He had attributed influence to both; one certain in its character and the other liable to wrong motivation, but his sole direction to his readers was a warning to be attentive to the possibility

1. Penington's works:vol.ii:p.253. 2. ibid vol.i:p.57.

of deception. On the question of thus being deceived
(I)

Penington wrote:-

" If it should be but the light of a natural conscience and it draw thee from sin, which separates from God, and so prepare thee for the understanding, believing, and receiving what the scripture saith of Christ, this is no very bad deceit, but if in the result it should prove to have been the light of the spirit, and thou all thy life time hast took it for the light of a natural conscience (and so hast despised, or at least neglected - if not reproached it) thou wilt then find that this was a very bad deceit."

The tendency of this teaching was to make the mental abilities of man incapable of assisting in the search for final spiritual reality; and yet when men come to meditate on the questions such a position involves, they realize how impossible such an assumption really is. The doctrine did fall into line with the orthodox dogma of human depravity, but it was out of accord with ordinary subjective experience. It is because man is possessed of intellectual awareness that he can experience subjective spiritual impressions. These impressions must be amenable to the cognitive faculties, arise in the consciousness, or the subject or them will be unable to give an intelligent interpretation of them. It is this acceptance of the basis of mystical experience, though ineffable, which enables the mind to interpret its meaning and value. That evaluation will not be

simply that of placing the experience in a scale of feeling states, but an orientation of it against the background of one's knowledge and experience. What part did previous experience and knowledge have in the acquisition and understanding of the "Inner Light"?

Barclay did not believe that any knowledge of the historical facts of Jesus was needed to be saved, but he did not realize that some kind of knowledge whereby one might interpret personal experience was needed before one could reasonably take the step by which he surrendered to the control of the "Inner Light." He held that the knowledge of external facts, an understanding of the gospel records, only gave an added ability to see more clearly the reasons for the "Inner Light," but the absence of that knowledge was no bar to coming to an appreciation of the Light. But knowledge arising from man's personal ability cannot be segregated from inner experience in such a way, for it has a very important role that it may fill. Such knowledge and understanding, though termed "carnal" by our authors, has a definite spiritual value. The failure to realize the value of certain subjective experiences may be due to the paucity of the knowledge and understanding of the mind. Even granting the possibility of an ineffectual experience of value without cognitive elements, and apart from

the possession of any intellectual content, the possession of the latter makes the former more likely and possible. For some people the knowledge of the historical and theological questions involved in the acceptance of Jesus as an historical person, making that acceptance more of a matter of intelligent assent than of faith, is of great importance.

Such a derogation of the intellectual operations of man's mind ordinarily would entail a corresponding disparagement of any belief arising out of the same. We should have expected that the proponent of such a view would have regarded with greater complacency any uncertainty concerning such a belief, than a disregard of the more personal evidence of the universal "gospel" of the Light within. Yet in discussing belief in the historic facts of Jesus' life, Barclay was very warm in his condemnation (1) of any disbelief. He expressed himself thus:-

" We do not hereby intend any way to lessen or derogate from the atonement and sacrifice of Jesus Christ; but on the contrary do magnify and exalt it. For as we believe all those things to have been certainly transacted which are recorded in the holy scriptures concerning the birth, life, miracles, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; so we do also believe that it is the duty of every one to believe it to whom it pleases God to reveal the same, and to bring to them the knowledge of it; yea, we believe it were damnable not to believe it when so declared."

Whether it was the theological inheritance which these men had, that was a predisposing cause of their attitude to the questions of the place and purpose of mind, or not, it is manifest that they had epistemological problems which they were incapable of solving.

Penington, in reply to the question "But what is
(I)
the way God teacheth you?", wrote:-

"God teacheth us by giving us an understanding to know him that is true, and by opening an ear in us to hear his voice, and so being kept within the limits of that understanding and ear, we come to know and hear aright."

This implies that in some mystical fashion God endows man with an added ability which has experiences unrelated to any awareness based upon acquired knowledge. Penington goes on to say that formal learning has been the cause in some of a spiritual presumption which has led to a rejection of the "Inner Light." There are many who quite naturally if they felt that they had no means of testing the ineffable states of mystical experience would reject them as grounds for the changed ordering of life. Any verbal instructions that such experience might be interpreted to convey would have to be communicated through the processes of ratiocination, unless the mystic divine endowment means a faculty for communicating verbal messages to his

consciousness direct.

Penington was in agreement with Barclay that the Christian must believe in the historical character of the Incarnation, but the acceptance of that did not necessarily mean that one accepted the "inner gospel." If one accepted the external facts of the Incarnation apart from the religious questions which it involved, one's attitude was similar to that concerning any other historical occurrence, and one's spiritual life was not affected. Faith, for Penington, was not to be found in the isolated acceptance of such historical evidences as we have for believing in the historic person of Jesus, but in an attitude which was (1) "an uniting to the nature of God in Christ." This would be an acceptance of the operations of the "Inner Light" and of the divine nature of the Christian revelation. A change in outlook, which we would attribute to mature reflection and progressive thinking, Penington attributed to "that of God which stirred in me." (2) If that had been his mind, under impulse from God, we could have understood the approach, but, again, it was a direct influence operating we know not how. That he did hold with Barclay that there was such a division between that of God within and the ordinary mental endowments (3) is well attested in such an excerpt as this:-

1. Penington's works: vol.i:p274. 2. ibid vol.iii:p.92
 3. ibid vol.iii: p.305.

"they...shall at last be justified by, and according to, the everlasting gospel, which justifieth all whatsoever, so far as in any measure they receive and are subject to the light and law of God's pure spirit, which the carnal mind cannot receive, nor be subject to."

When Penington came to the question of how knowledge, which did influence one's inner life, was received if the "carnal mind" was closed as an avenue, he postulated cognitive and rational attributes as parts of the Light itself. We have mentioned the difficulty of ascertaining the seat of this dual operation, but such a psychological problem did not affect thinkers in those days when little, if any, attention was given to questions of how we think. Our author believed that man possessed two receptive capacities: one for the reception of knowledge with a literal application, and, the other, for knowledge with a spiritual and symbolic meaning. He held that that which was received through the medium of one did not influence that which had been received through the other. All true knowledge of God, as apart from formal learning, came through this "Inner Light." If one never exercised this added faculty one was not able to achieve salvation. (I) We read:-

" If ye see not the way of life by the inward light, which alone can shew it, ye lose your souls."

This is a very dogmatic statement, but, in such a time of ignorance concerning many facets of psychological and epistemological problems, and when religious feeling was

often profound, it was a natural expression of the author's faith, even though to us, the whole position, as expressed in his writings, is full of contradictions and impossibilities. If Penington had followed some of the implications of his own statements he would have reached a position more consonant with general religious opinion.

(I)

He wrote:-

"that if ye gather a knowledge and wisdom from the letter of the scriptures, after the manner that they did, without knowledge of the word within, and without a light within from the word, ye lose the living faith, ye are but dead branches."

In this quotation there is a reference to the author's belief in a latent, as contrasted with an obvious, meaning in much Scripture. The reader who is only aware of the obvious meaning, and never realizes the latent significance of what he reads, misses something of its possible value. Sometimes we miss this underlying reference to spiritual realities because we are insensitive to it. For Penington the implicit value of Scripture, which sometimes was the chief value, was "the word within the word." If Scripture never influences us through its double nature it is because we have ourselves become spiritually "dead branches." There are often implicit values in many objective phenomena to which some are never sensitive, but that

1. Penington's works: vol.i: p.253.

insensitiveness we would not attribute to any lack of capacity, but to a failure to develop one's mental and spiritual resources. Such a truth is portrayed in our Lord's parable of the talents.

Penn does not appear to have been troubled with this aspect of the question; he seems to have had a normal view of the place and purpose of the intellect of man. For him "convincement" was an impression upon the understanding which helps the individual if " ...our minds
(1)
be but seriously stayed thereon."

We are taken into the deep waters of theological thought by Barclay when he declares that the "Inner Light" is not a spiritual accident, but a "real spiritual substance."⁽²⁾ It has substantial existence in the heart of man and from its actual presence, which man can sense and know, and the influence which under certain conditions it can exert, a new life is inaugurated in man. An evidence for such continued substantial existence, and that it is not dependent for its presence upon any culmination of inward spiritual tendency, is to be found in its perseverance in the most morally depraved man. Being of such an immutable nature it persists apart from any moral condition in its environment. If we ask when is an individual actually under control of this "Inner Light",

1. Penn's works: p.75. 2. Apology: p.97.

if its primary condition is unaffected by any circumstance in the life, Barclay replies that the good and evil principles operative within both give rise to certain accidents knowable to the subject and the kind of accidents in the ascendancy determine the final condition of the person. (1) We read:-

" For where two contrary accidents are in one subject, as health and sickness in a body, the subject receives its denomination from the accident which prevails most."

Penn, although he did not go so philosophically into the question, followed Barclay in believing that the "Inner Light" was a moral reprover that continued, undiminished in its power, through all the aberrations of moral delinquency. (2) He expressed himself by writing:-

" His all searching eye will penetrate their thickest coverings, and strike up a light in that obscurity, which shall terrify their guilty souls; and which they shall never be able to extinguish. Indeed, their accuser is with them, they can no more be rid of him than of themselves; he is in the midst of them, and will stick close to them."

These views of the continuance of a vital religious principle entailed a theory of the duality of man's essential nature. The ordinary interests of life were allied to the operation of carnal faculties and these could thus be opposed to the "divine life and principle of the holy Jesus." (3)

Barclay believed that the dual nature of the inner life was as universally evident as the "Inner Light." God had given to all men a measure of Light, but that Light had to meet the opposition of the conterminous condition of evil which had resulted from Adam's Fall - this latter condition was the "universal seed of sin,"⁽¹⁾ resulting from the fact that "all men partake of the fruit of Adam's fall."⁽²⁾ The contemporary doctrine of human depravity, as we have hitherto noticed, played some part in producing ideas such as these, and Barclay, as a man of his times, was open to the impressions of the thought of his day. He, however, carried this idea one step further and held that as a result of the Fall man was deprived "of the sensation or feeling of this inward testimony, or seed of God..." The first thing necessary to the subjugation of that in the inner life which was in any way a resultant of the "fallen, degenerated, and dead" life of Adam, was the restoration within of that condition of Adam's pristine sensibility of God - the "Inner Light." The truly enlightened life was that in which the opposition between these two factors, or even a state of equipose, had been ended by such a liberation of the Light that it was supreme. The dual nature of the life within was thus described by Penington:-⁽³⁾

1. Apology: p.76

2. *ibid*: p.99

3. Penington's works:vol.ii:p.540.

" This is the sum or substance of our religion; to wit, to feel and discern the two seeds: the seed of enmity, the seed of love; the seed of the flesh, the seed of the Spirit; the seed of Hagar, the seed of Sarah; the seed of the Egyptian womb, the holy seed of Israel."

The seed was thus a potential principle; it was dormant in the life until fertilized by the light of God's spirit.

Barclay had found the origin of the opposing negative principle in the moral aberration of Adam, but Penington carried it direct to the work of a personal devil. This devil was in opposition to God. Man's inner life is the ground of a continual opposition between two spirits because he is the constant object of God's love on the one hand, and the malicious designs of the devil on the other. We read in Penington's works:-

" There is a principle of darkness in the hearts and minds of men, which is as a seed or root of corruption in them, bringing forth in them fruits of sin and unrighteousness unto death.

And there is also a principle of the pure heavenly light, as a free gift from God, to discover the darkness, turn man's heart against it, and lead him into the way and path of life.

Now as Satan rules in the principle of darkness, and there is the power of death therein; so God rules in the principle of light, and this is the power of life and redemption manifested by God therein."

Without such a light, which becomes the instrument of God's power, man left in the state to which the devil reduced our first parents and mankind, would never have been able to

free himself from a continuance of that satanic influence. Whenever that evil propensity makes itself felt within the life, it produces an immediate reaction upon the good potentiality - it quickens it. The degree of quickening will depend on the degree of opposition to the evil which has taken place previously, and which has produced a tendency to respond. But one can easily be deceived in making a decision regarding the class to which an inner operation belongs. (1) Penington writes:-

" Therefore a man must watch and wait, and fear, and pray that he may distinguish between the nature of spirits in himself, that so he may know (in the light of the Lord) when the Lord speaks, and also when the mysterious spirit of deceit strives to speak like the Lord. Now man cannot know this of himself, but as he is taught of the Lord; at the very time when the snare comes; and he must not determine hastily, but wait to feel that wherein the Lord appears and speaks to him and wherein the enemy cannot speak."

These early writers demanded that religious experience should be based upon an inner condition of which the individual was aware; it was to be, said Barclay, the fruitage that "lieth not in the literal, but in the experimental knowledge.." In this they were at one with the orthodox evangelicals of their time, and they sought, as far as possible, to harmonize their own view of how the "Inner Light" resulted in salvation with the ideas of these

I. Penington's works: vol.iv:p.33.

evangelicals. To do this satisfactorily meant that they had to have some consistent explanation of the propitiatory character of the Atonement. Penington often dealt with the query of how a man could "have his sins washed away by the blood of Jesus," and replied that only when one's inner life was illumined by the "Inner Light" could he really understand the meaning of the "Blood", and how God came to have it shed. The "Blood" is a spiritual attribute of the divine essence; it is an accident of Jesus which the "Inner Light" prepares the inner life to receive and that preparation entails the "washing away of sin," for it eliminates from the inner life those evil forces opposed to the "good within." It was natural that many people should not have understood this involved mystical reasoning, this explanation upon explanation of mysterious inner states, this symbolic verbosity, and should have charged the Quakers with making the "Blood" of no account. Again and again it is evident that the Cross was a problem to these formulators of Quaker doctrine, and they had great difficulty in bringing external historical facts into some semblance of accord with their theory of subjective religious history. Penington declared that the most ancient of Quakers had professed faith in (1) "Christ both inwardly and outwardly," and went on to say:-

1. Penington's works:vol.iii:p.403.

" That if Christ had not come in the flesh, in the fullness of time, to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, and to offer himself up a sacrifice for mankind, all mankind had utterly perished."

It is difficult to understand the addition of the words "in the flesh" to the primary condition of salvation, for the outward crucifixion of Jesus, whilst held to be symbolic of the suffering caused by man's willfulness through the ages to the eternal Logos, was not held to be retro-active in its operation. Such suffering did not need a material physical manifestation to implement its own validity, even if such a manifestation were a concession to man's inability fully to comprehend the spiritual nature of God's dealings with him.

It is difficult at times to understand the reasoning by which, on the one hand, the Quaker of this period held that salvation had been possible from the beginning because all men had received an endowment of the "Inner Light", and yet maintained, on the other hand, that "he that knoweth the light of God's Spirit, knoweth Christ" without any
(I)
reference to time. We can understand that:-

" There must be somewhat let down from God into a man's heart to change his heart, to redeem it to God, or he cannot be saved."

But to equate that, as a pre-christian experience, with an experience of Jesus, in the matter of direct effectiveness,

I. Penington's works: vol.iii:p.72.

becomes difficult. The writers wanted to formulate a doctrine which covered all the different phenomena of spiritual apprehension in every age and the historic appearance of Jesus in the flesh, but that appearance had a significance which did not lend itself so easily to interpretation from such an extended time relationship.

(I)

Penington wrote:-

" There is no salvation but in and by Christ Jesus; and the salvation is not to them that received a bare notion of him under the law, or another empty notion under the profession of the gospel; but only to them that receive him as he was promised, as the holy seed. "

But here we see a time relationship introduced which alienated many, who on the other hand were included by the doctrine that Light was in man from the start, from the blessings of the outward gospel. Any prophetic sense which man developed and which was the ground of an apocalyptic hope was, relatively, late in framing a "promise." Our author does not say whether he believed that "promise" to have been innate in the spiritual condition of all, but lacking that we are entitled to consider that the question never occurred to him. That there was an implied retro-action in the benefits conferred in virtue of the Cross is indicated by Barclay, who wrote:-

(2)

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1. Penington's works: vol.iii: p.12.
 2. Apology: p.99.

" Nevertheless, as we firmly believe it was necessary that Christ should come, that by his death and sufferings he might offer up himself a sacrifice to God for our sins.....so we believe that the remission of sins, which any partake of, is only in and by virtue of that most satisfactory sacrifice, and not otherwise..."

Penn also implied no essential difference between the influence of the immanent spiritual condition of man before Jesus and the power to change men introduced into life by the Crucifixion. He wrote:-

"that the light's leading us out of darkness (that is, unrighteousness) is the same with the 'blood of Jesus Christ' cleaning from all sin."

So sin becomes equated with the darkness of men's minds before the Christian revelation, and to be translated from the latter and cleansed from the former, according to the text, are equivalent. The only difference was one of emphasis: what had always been possible was in the Crucifixion of Jesus made so vivid that ever afterwards men would see in that supreme witness to a continuing fact something analagous to the fact itself. Referring to this aspect of the question Penn wrote:-

"what he (Jesus) then suffered and did in that transcendent manifestation, may, by way of eminency, have the credit of the whole work unto itself that he ever did before, or might do afterwards, for man's salvation."

However, while Penn, with others, made salvation as extensive

in time as the bestowal of the Light, he yet gave a significance to the fact of the Crucifixion itself. Those who knew the gospel story had a greater responsibility in rejecting it, for it was an added witness to the Light which was available - the outward Christ made an added appeal to the Christ manifest within the Light. To reject the belief that Christ had come in the flesh was so intimately bound up with the belief in the Light that to reject one was to reject the other. It was the Light within that saved. That did not pertain to any outward phenomenon of the Christian revelation, but in accepting the authority of the Light to the degree necessary for salvation there is produced a spiritual condition, which creates a necessity for accepting the facts of the outward life and work of Jesus, if those facts become known. It was a matter of the mutual response of two aspects of one truth, based upon an inner essential fact, to each other. It is the underlying unity of these two facts which becomes the real Cross to which Penn appeals, and he only gives an emphasis to the objective fact of the Crucifixion in so far as it becomes a type of this other Cross. He wrote:- (I)

" ...the cross mystical is that Divine Grace and power which crosseth the carnal wills of men, and gives a contradiction to their corrupt affections..."

And even as the "Inner Light" becomes the medium for Christ,
 so, as was suggested, Penn completes the picture by saying;-^(I)

"...the souls of the wicked are the devil's house."

This emphasis upon the paramount position of the "Inner Light" in the spiritual history of mankind from the very beginning, a position and authority which the Crucifixion and revelation of Jesus did not essentially affect, without any permutations or mutations being consequent upon historical, geographical, or cultural influences, brought many misunderstandings. The Apology of Barclay contained much of the uncertainty of these positions, and consequently was by many held to be at variance with the Evangelical interpretation of the Atonement. It was natural that later on the reading of it should be regarded as exercising a baneful influence, and during the time of the Separations it was subjected to much criticism. As late as the beginning of the 19th. century it was banned, on this account, from Ackworth School.

Through all the varying aspects of spiritual experience these Quakers made reference to the "Inner Light" as their chief authority. The Protestants of the time had set up the Bible as their final reference for matters in dispute, but the contemporary Quakers gave Scripture a subordinate place, and thus they followed Fox. Barclay, Penn,

and Penington were all agreed in making Scripture the production of the "Inner Light" and thus subservient as a product of the primary spiritual condition. It did, however, give a faithful and true witness to the work and character of the Light. Barclay wrote:-
(1)

" Nevertheless, as that which giveth a true and faithful testimony of the first foundation, they are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty...."

If the Scriptures were written as a result of the activity of the "Inner Light" in the lives of the authors, then it follows that the fullest understanding of them and their application to life was possible only to those who gave the "Inner Light" the opportunity to influence them in their reading and living - of this Penington was convinced. It was the influence of the "Inner Light" which produced the ability to interpret the spiritual implications of Scripture. Beyond the verbal meaning there were spiritual implications which it was essential one should appreciate in making any application of Scripture to life's conduct. The insight into such spiritual implications is a concomitant of the inner condition produced by the activity of the Light. Penington wrote:-
(2)

" And this doth further seal to us our belief of this principle, because we find it a key by which God openeth the scriptures to us, and giveth us the living sense and evidence of them in our hearts!"

Penn was in entire agreement with the others respecting the authoritative worth of Scripture. The advent of Jesus and the consequent Christian dispensation altered the place of Scripture as an authority, for the gospel, in its finite and external form and its infinite inner manifestation, was the supreme authority for life and conduct, but, said
 (I)
 Penn:-

"yet are they to be reverently read, believed, and fulfilled under the gospel."

But Penn carries this doctrine of the "Inner Light" in relation to Scripture still further and makes the initial appearance of Scripture to have been unnecessary: he reasons that if it were to the "Inner Light" operating in the lives of the writers of Scripture, which was directly responsible for its appearance, not only as history, but also as prophecy, then it is equally possible for the Light in men's hearts now to produce the same Scripture records - to deny such a possibility he labels "blasphemous." That the Light does not reveal to each individual all the facts of biblical narrative may be held to be due to the fact that we already possess them in such form. But we are not entitled, on that ground, to deny the possibility of each spiritually endowed person being independently capable of inwardly

knowing those facts. He proceeds in his reasoning to the point of saying that, in the event of the New Testament being entirely lost, and the facts thereof forgotten, if God thought it necessary that mankind should be again put in possession of them, then the "Inner Light" would give men this knowledge. He held that such a direct method of inspiration was used by God, two thousand years after the events, to communicate to Moses a knowledge of the facts of the Creation.

From this study of these Quaker scholastics certain definite impressions emerge. We have noted how on some minor points there are some slight differences of approach, but that often these can be accounted for on the basis of a variety of personal interest. Penn was a man of business ability and he sought to find in religion a force of pragmatic value. In his desire for a practical application of religious truth to life and its problems, Penn was at one in spirit with Fox. He saw the necessity for the "Inner Light" to have a direct influence upon the social attitudes of mankind. This influence tended to the successful pursuit of happiness, and Penn's interpretation of the practical value of religion can be seen in his little book of moral maxims, which had a very extended sale, entitled "Some Fruits of Solitude." But apart from differences which arise out of personal idiosyncracies of educational, theological, and

cultural background, there is a definite agreement on the doctrine that the "Inner Light" is the supreme value of life. This acceptance became almost an obsession, for they went to extremes of postulation to maintain the all pervasive and authoritative nature of the "Inner Light." To make it an abiding, unchangeable, and unchanging principle of life they made it completely independent of mental, moral, and historical conditions; changes in those conditions only made the possibility of the Light's operation greater, they in no way made any difference to the Light itself. It was with this conviction of an independent and immanent spiritual condition bestowed on all mankind by God, preached by Fox and further established by Barclay, Penn, and Penington, that Quakerism moved on to the next stage in its history.

CHAPTER FOUR

The interpretations prevalent during the
period of Quietism.

Again and again the "golden age" of many a movement is that contemporary with the time of the founder's activity. Men, by the strength of their own convictions and personal dynamic, initiate new movements and imbue others with the essential spirit of leadership, and so witness remarkable success attend their attack upon some accepted situation. Such a movement may continue to increase in numerical strength and proceed by the force of its own momentum, but often this original enthusiasm is dissipated, and the movement gradually approximates itself to the normal forms of sectarian life. Its contribution to general well-being will, in all probability, be proportionate^o to its numbers and organization, and any improvement in either condition will see an increase in its ministry to the needs of life, but that contribution will be a normal part of the ministry of the Church Catholic; it will not be a distinctive one. To this general description Quakerism was no exception. Its greatest period was also its first period.

The personality of Fox impressed itself deeply upon the movement he inaugurated and also was instrumental in winning men like Barclay, Penn, and Penington. If their convictions were sharpened in the conflict with contrary conviction, their enthusiasm and testimony were given

forceful character by the persecution they were called upon to suffer. The spirit of martyrdom was evident on all sides, and to read accounts of the first fifty years is to peruse story after story of the "saints in prison."^(I) Such testimony to the conviction and character engendered by the Quaker faith brought the natural result - an increased public interest.

The persecution which preceeded the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689 was a primary cause, not only of the strength of the early movement, but also, of the development of conditions in the Society which eventually led to certain changes. With the development of the American colonies during the 17th. century a "way of escape" was created for those who decided to seek the opportunity to practise their faith in peace. In some of the colonies the Quakers were persecuted, but in others there was comparative freedom from disturbance. With the grant of Pennsylvania to William Penn in 1681, this place became the mecca for thousands of Quakers. Because immigration calls for enterprize and activity, and in those days ardency of spirit, this migration took away many of the best and younger men from the Society in England.

I. In this connection see:-

Besse: The Sufferings of the People called Quakers.

Hodgson: Select Historical Memoirs, etc.

The great contributory cause of change was, however, to be found in the passing of the Toleration Act. It had been the proud boast of the founders that Quakers never worshipped in secret, but always openly. Such an attitude invited persecution. The period was one of a crushing persecution, under the provisions of the Conventicle Act and the Five Mile Act, of the whole Nonconformist body. It was the organized opposition of the dissenting bodies that "wrested from English statesmen the first legal (I) recognition of freedom of worship in the Toleration Act." This Act left the previous ones still on the Statute Book, but abolished the penalties of the same. The effect was that it became legal, under certain strict conditions, for Dissenters to meet in registered meeting places. The passing of this Act was the climax which inaugurated change, and many Quakers, who, under the fierce persecution, had been vigorous were now, in the atmosphere of limited liberty, not inclined for heroic effort in the work of propaganda.

It will be easily understood how, with such a legal recognition, Dissent flourished and became more and more of political influence and consequence. From such a movement Quakerism sought to disassociate itself and the

first official sign of this tendency was in the Yearly Meeting minutes of 1689, where we read that the Quakers are called upon to be:-

" ...the Lord's hidden ones, that are always quiet in the land, and as those prudent ones and wise in heart who know when and where to keep silent."

It was the acceptance of worldly wisdom as a directing agency in the Quaker reasoning. If political inactivity led to a willingness to be still in regard to matters of public moment there were also other interests arising which reinforced this tendency. The end of active persecution gave the characteristic Quaker business acumen opportunity for enlarged operation and as a consequence many of them became wealthy. American Friends who came to England during this period on "religious concerns" noted with disapproval the increased devotion to business activity.

(I)

One writer has gone as far as to say:-

" And wealth then, as it is now, was the chief cause of corruption in the Society."

We would, however, only accept the accession of wealth as a contributory cause of such spiritual decline as became manifest at this time. Even in the development of business activity, however, the Quaker bore testimony to the all embracing character of the "Inner Light." With the possibility

of all men sharing in the guidance of inner spiritual illumination, it became the Quaker to speak truly, act honestly, and deal straightforwardly, and, in such ways, appeal to the Light in every man. It was this conception which was the basis, as we have seen in our study of Fox, of the fixed price custom which the Quaker developed, and which was a contribution of importance to contemporary business ethics.

One of the changes which financial and worldly success brought was in a gradual changing of the early simplicity into a cold formalism. Plainness of speech, dress, and customs, which Fox had accepted because of a sincere and conscientious interpretation of the fundamental positions of his doctrine, were now to become outward forms by which the Quaker gradually became recognizable as a member of a "peculiar people." This increased attention to the ordinary conditions of life within the Quaker fold led to a gradual discountenancing of music and other simple pleasures on the plea that anything that had for its sole purpose the gratification of the self was to be condemned. Often concerning such trivial items in the daily experience there was a morbid introspection and self examination, allied to a readiness to criticize others which was a self-imposed burden. In matters where

no such test could be applied there was an inclination to extravagance. The joyous abandon, of which we have so much evidence in the early journals, which was manifested as a fruit of religious enthusiasm in the early days, and which was accompanied by such an eager readiness to suffer in the attempt to propagate their faith as extensively as possible, was slowly replaced by an anxiety to be as little conspicuous in public activity as possible. This, again, tended to produce an organized, but isolated group content to enjoy their own convictions regarding life, but unwilling, or perhaps believing it impossible, to convince others of their truth.

With the passing of the veteran leaders, Fox in 1690, Penington in 1680, Penn in 1718, there was a dearth of men capable of interpreting the Quaker message to the world in terms of contemporary thought. In this period, however, there was one man who commanded general respect and attention, this was John Woolman, but his greatest work and influence was in the American colonies. The implied need for the transformation of the Quaker dynamic into a willingness to contribute its life in social and humanitarian service, which should have been one of the first continuing outcomes of the doctrine of the "Inner Light", was not generally recognized until the

nineteenth century arrived.

Social, theological, and personal traits all combined to isolate the Quaker from the normal activities of the community of his time. The relative freedom of the post-Toleration period gave an added incentive to the movements by which Quakerism became even more sharply defined as that with a distinctive religious outlook, and with the consequent attenuated contacts the Quaker was thus driven in to the world of ideas and life of his own sect. In (1) the Advice from the Yearly Meeting of 1703 we read:-

" That Friends exercise a godly Christian Care for the Education of Children in the fear..... and that poor friends' children freely partake of such Education and learning as to fit 'em for Apprenticeships and to provide School masters and mistresses which are faithful and not to send Children to the world."

The more the Quaker was thus driven in to the world of ideas and practises of his own group, the more he began to fear the contamination of those without his own social and theological environment. The power which had gone, in previous times, to the creating of the martyr spirit now became transformed into a readiness to withstand social ostracism on account of personal, rather than intellectual, idiosyncracies. In the public mind much of its opposition to the theological positions of Quakerism was simply a

carrying over of its reaction to the peculiarities of Quaker garb, speech, and manners. Naturally it was not possible for the Quaker to completely isolate himself from the world outside, his business activity brought him into close contact with much of it, but it did tend to make him one of a distinctive group living and working within the larger one. In George Fox's time there was little suggestion of even a partial alienation from mankind in general: Fox moved about with one all possessing desire to win them, and any distinguishing feature was a normal and understood keeping of conduct in accord with principle; it was never an idiosyncrasy per se.

It was in these gradually accentuated social differences that we find the first evidences of a slowly changing theological outlook. Towards the close of the 17th. century the damping influence of Quietism was to be clearly observed. Not only had many Quakers withdrawn from the world, but they had withdrawn into their own minds, and in support of such an anti-social manifestation they contended they were not to be held finally responsible for the wilful perversity of mankind in refusing to heed the "Inner Light": many from this time forward eschewed any participation in political affairs. Their major concern was (possible

not that of exerting an influence that would leaven the general religious state of mankind, for anything short of personal spiritual perfection was not an adequate ideal, but a concentration upon a maximum development of their individual and particular states. The "Kingdom of Heaven" was not a social goal, but an inner state of spiritual perfection and the latter, as an object of desire, was to be preferred. The "Inner Light" could not secure absolute dominion in the world of organized mankind, but that dominion was possible where the individual co-operated in "bringing all into subjection." The ordinary social and family ties by which a community is established gave way before the idea that the basis of a truly religious community was that of the "Inner Light." The concatenation of circumstances, already mentioned, made this attitude the more easy of adoption by an ever increasing number until it became the general characteristic of the Society.

The idea that thus organized the Quakers would become a community within a community, and because of their higher group life more sure of divine favour, was expressed by

(I)

Woolman thus:-

" Christ being the light dwells always in the light,
and if our walking be thus, and in every affair
and concern we faithfully follow this divine leader,

he preserves from giving just cause for any quarrel with us. And where this foundation is laid, and mutually kept to by families conversant with each other, the way is open for those comforts in society which our heavenly father intends as a part of our happiness in this world, and then may we experience the goodness and pleasantness of dwelling together in unity."

(I)

He also writes:-

" And an exercise of spirit attends men, that we who are convinced of the pure leadings of truth, may bow in the deepest reverence, and so watchfully regard this leader, that many who are grievously entangled in a wilderness of vain customs, may look upon us, and be instructed."

The sense of there being an uniform and group testimony by the Quaker arose from the implicit conception that attention to the divine teacher produced an uniform reaction. The behaviour, which became traditional, of the early leaders was accepted as a standard by which all Quaker behaviour could be judged - any deviation from that was an evidence of a decline from the teachings of the "inward monitor." In the Wilkinson and Story separation (1675) this point had been under discussion. Story, and some with him, had felt that any setting up of a central authority, like the London Yearly Meeting, with power to lay down certain rules of faith and procedure, was akin to Papacy; giving an outside authority the right to decide what inner individual spirits should believe. Story and

those with him believed that it was just as much possible for group guidance to be astray as individual illumination to be deceptive. At this time there was a spirit of conformity and formalism evident, but it was a loyalty to objective forms which left the individual free to seek after his own peculiar inner satisfactions. It is the view of one historian that the reaction from external authority, of which this separation was an evidence, was one of the predisposing causes of the Quietism which
(1)
settled down on the Society.

The true mystic is one who can easily make the transference of interest from an objective field of attention to an inner state of meditation, and when the Quaker began to feel, either consciously or otherwise, the effect of the attempt to organize his belief to give authority to an objective expression of it, he turned to the inner field where, by the use of symbolic language, and the method of intuitive approach, he could still exercise spiritual freedom. Such a friction set up by external organization would only increase the anti-social tendency already engendered, but instead of its being a tendency away from individual Quakers, it was a further retreat into a separate world of personal ideas - it tended

1. See Barclay: Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth.

more and more to make the final character of Quaker practise subjective. The movement could still be recognized as a corporate expression of religious faith and practise upon a certain level, whereas in the deeper experiences of individuals it had become egocentric. There were men, notably John Woolman, who felt that it was on that far removed plane, at times almost subliminal, that the most significant experiences were apprehended. There are records in John Woolman's Journal that indicate that he probably believed that even dreams were a nocturnal extension of the work of the "Inner Light." Writing to (I) John Pemberton in 1760 he said:-

" Last night in my sleep I thought I was in a room with thee, and thou drawing thy chair nigh mine did, in a friendly way, tell me of sundry particular failings thou had observed in me, and expressed some desire that I might do better. I felt inwardly thankful for thy care over me and made little other reply than to tell thee that I took it very kind."

Subjective guidance could have been found in no more seemingly distant sphere than that provided by dreams, and yet if Woolman had had any inkling of the truth of how dream content is so often a contribution from the conscious stream of daily experience, and that the ordinary processes of the instinctive life determine so much of its

I. Woolman's Journal: p.18.

character, how he would have rejected his dreams as a vehicle of immanent guidance!

The development of quietism within the Society had a profound effect upon it; something of this effect was to be seen in the decline of the movement's influence. In its early years Quakerism gave promise of becoming a dominant form of Non-conformity. The religious conditions of the times were propitious for the propagation of the Quaker's conception of man's essential nature and need, and converts were made very rapidly. The decline in the rate of the movement's growth coincides with the gradual development of the quietist attitude. In explanation of this attitude some have looked abroad to Continental quietism for an answer, but, while outward circumstances were favourable, the interpretations of the doctrine of the "Inner Light", which had become current, so interpreted the religious life as subjective and intuitive that it naturally followed that many, in carrying out the teaching, became quietist in attitude. Only a well informed and clear thinker can keep mysticism as a personal religious attitude without bringing some kind of quietistic character into it.

So long as the mysticism which was inherent in

Quakerism had the drive, the energy, the intellectual ability, of men like Fox and the scholastics, quietistic tendencies were kept within bounds, but with the passing of these men and no others arising to take their places, the inherent weaknesses began to become obvious. If it had been a quietism that had been adopted solely as a way of arriving at a decision, a method of securing guidance for personal problems, it would not have left, perchance, such a mark upon the history of the Quakers. But with the spread of Quakerism as a religious attitude there was also evident -perhaps the two were connected - a tendency to become more and more a "peculiar people" standing aloof from the normal life of the world, and withdrawing into the life of their own group. Fox when itinerating had availed himself of any opportunity to preach, but now travelling Friends began to confine themselves to going from one settled meeting to another.

The Quaker with his belief in the non-human character of the "Inner Light", and holding the doctrine of human depravity, felt that the ideal way of preparing for the manifestation of the Light was by an attempted suppression of anything that appeared to be "creaturely activity." And the Quietistic attitude tends to produce a passive attitude in the matter of religious exercise. The mysticism of the early leaders had been of an aggressive type, not because its intellectual formulations carried such implications, but

because the proponents themselves were men of initial robust character. The symbolic language of these men became a live and pulsating medium, applicable directly to so much of human experience because they themselves had had such experiences as a direct result of their own spiritual development. Bereft of such formative influences Quaker mysticism tended to flow into normal channels. The basic reasons, in addition to the implications of the interpretations of their central doctrine, for the settlement of quietism on quakerism at this time is well expressed thus:-
(I)

" They do not mix well, these mystics: they must live as objects to the crowd, solitary often, often in exclusive groups of like minded spirits, willing and able to accept from each other large meanings on small suggestions, leaping to some substance through a swirl of dizzy symbol."

We have noticed the Quaker distrust of the intellectual faculties, and that distrust was heightened by a contemporary phase of English thought - that of Deism. Deism may be said to have arisen during the early years of the Restoration and to have become almost negligible as a contributor to current thought by 1790 when Burke said the Deistic writers were almost forgotten. The Deist held God to be distinct from Nature or the Universe, and

was an utterly remote First Cause, and not revealing himself in any way amenable to human perception. It held that the grounds for idea and practise are to be found in the reason and natural understanding alone, and this was a form of rationalist approach to the problem of experience. John Locke had in his "Essay on the Human Understanding" (published in 1690) maintained that the content of the mind was furnished by cognized experience and that it was not the subject of any innate ideas. The Quaker, who never made reason the ground for his acceptance of an innate condition of divine potentiality, was thus faced with another impetus fully to divorce religious experience from intellectual processes. On the basis of contemporary thought they were not equipped with a rational explanation capable of meeting the new attack of Deism; they met it on the safer ground of personal experience. It was safer ground for them because in the sphere of an intellectual interpretation of religious experience there was much that could be contested as being allied to error and superstition. The philosophical attitude of the time was built upon certain presumptions that definitely excluded the admission, as intelligently relevant, of much of Quaker thought and belief. Deism carried the conception that the mind was

a passive faculty registering only sense experience and because of the transcendental nature of God, incapable of being the vehicle of any kind of divine immanence. If the Deist brought God into his reasoning at all it was only because he needed such a conception to complete his philosophical conception. Divorcing God from life and experience he thus denied the only ground upon which the Quaker was prepared to approach the questions involved. Mysticism is essentially supernatural and the influence of Deism was to eradicate any such condition from the necessary attitudes of life. The Quaker, repulsed by this current attempt at an elimination of all that was implied in his doctrine of the "Inner Light", thus retreated more and more to his own region of spiritual certainty, and became increasingly quietistically inclined. Religion, at the mercy of theologians who were influenced by Deism, lost much of its natural warmth and fervour and became intellectually cold and abstract: the Quaker had, even as a Quietist, an experiential certitude of an opposite possibility for the Christian. Many within the Established Church were disquieted at the trend of thought and feeling, but it was not until the revivals under the Wesleys and Whitefield that the Church, and religious thought generally,

was awakened from its apathy. William Savery, whose ministry was exercised towards the end of this period, whose travels were extensive, again and again in his Journal notes the effect of deistic tendencies upon the religious life, and to that he attributed much of the absence of enthusiasm which was everywhere to be noted. One of the more frequently met results of Quietism's influence on the Society, as a result of its reaction to Deism, was the habit which was very prevalent of confining their reading to religious books; the idea was that the truly Christian person would have guidance and understanding of other necessary realms of thought made manifest by the "Inner Light."

The quietist Quaker thus turned to the "Inner Light" as the only source for spiritual guidance and gave an important character to it as the central fact of religious experience, which carried the implication that the other (1) means of help were to be discouraged. We are told of one lady who, at the beginning of the 19th. century recalling her long life, "esteemed it a signal favour that for years she had had no human help or sympathy." Everywhere the arid effect of this retreat into a subjective interpretation of the Light's working was to be seen. No longer was an

itinerating ministry able to keep the gathered together as did Fox, and this period of quietism left its own monuments in closed meeting houses and depleted memberships, and its epitaphs in many a dry book or journal. In the records of the Kendal Quarterly Meeting the following
(I)
query can be faintly traced:-

" Whether Friends keep up their week-day meetings, observing the hour appointed, and how pressed out of dullness and sleepiness when met, and how such as sit next them that be overcome by sleepiness do discharge their brotherly duty by stirring them up?"

When Fox preached the doctrine of the "Inner Light" the convinced were ever on the alert so that they would not miss "the day of their visitation" and that they would be ever ready to listen to the "admonitions of their inward teacher." The caution which we noted manifested in the London Yearly Meeting epistle of 1689 as something unusual had, within the next century, become the habitual mode of official expression.

Although in the time of Fox meetings waited in silence for the "springing up of the seed within", (that silence was a means to an end) now in the time of quietism it became elevated into an end in itself; the best possible method of worship only to be broken when one had an uncontrollable urge to speak. This corporate silence

I. John Wilhelm Rowntree: Essays and Addresses; p.59.

was often the only feature of a meeting for worship and was known to go on for hours. To such meetings visiting Friends would frequently contribute no verbal message, but would sit in a condition of mental abstraction, aware of what was going forward, but making no contribution by directed vigorous thinking. To introduce such a condition they sought to prevent anything impinging on consciousness which, by its nature, could only be dispelled either by rigid suppression, alien to the quietistic mood, or by the normal process of relating it to the recognized mind content. Preparation for meeting became a mental discipline whereby anything outward was prevented from securing conscious attention, and nothing inward was able to secure a place of major attention. John Griffith (1713-1776)
(1)
writes:-

" I always coveted to be wholly unacquainted with the states of meetings by outward information in all my travels, and when, by the discourse of Friends previous to my attending them, there appeared any probability of their inadvertently opening in my hearing anything of that kind, I have either generally stopped them or walked away out of hearing. But in general Friends who entertain us in our travels have more prudence and a better guard in these respects; as indeed all ought, for it straightens and may give much uneasiness to right-spirited ministers, who have a sure infalible guide within, and therefore have no need of any outward guide or information in their services....."

Such a technique for the securing of a mental passiveness, and as a prerequisite of worship was an outcome of the interpretation of the doctrine of the "Inner Light" to mean that it was not only independent of intellect, but also it was hindered by its operation. The "Inner Light" could not manifest itself while the ordinary intellectual processes were in operation, and from this standpoint the idea in worship came to be not only one of outward silence and inactivity, but a condition of inward disassociation from any awareness of the cognitive operations of the mind. John Wigham, giving advice to a young minister, as "an old friend" said:-

" Young man, I heard thee say in meeting, 'I think.' Now thou shouldst not have been thinking." (1)

And of another quaker minister it is recorded that:- (2)

"if before meeting a passage of scripture came into his mind, he would not look it up in his bible lest he should seem to be preparing a sermon."

Mysticism, of course, provides its devotee with an ineffable experience-manifold for which the ordinary person is not possessed of any profound understanding or intellectual equipment for a rational explanation. That experience is of such an authoritative nature that the subject is hardly able to detach himself sufficiently to make an unbiased

1. A. Neave Brayshaw: The Quakers; p.207

2. *ibid* p.209.

analysis of it. It was probably a feeling of inability thus rationally to explain, in terms of personal satisfaction, the experience, that led the Quaker to turn from any aspect of religious exercise which connoted a dependence upon rational elements. To have applied the rationalism of the Deist would have produced sterility, and the Quaker being saved from that by his spiritual isolation became introspective. If with such a passive attitude to the forms of worship the mind became clearly exercised about some accepted matter, that cogitation could not be attributed to the initial impulse of the individual, but to the incursion of God through the medium of the Light. Woolman (1) wrote:-

" As our understandings are opened by the pure light, we experience that through an inward approaching to God, the mind is strengthened to obedience; and by gratifying those desires which are not of his begetting, those approaches to him are obstructed, and the deceivable spirit gains strength."

The mental sterility, which was one of the outcomes of Quietism, was not the only unfortunate fruit of this period. The general acceptance of the view that with the "Inner Light" man was endowed with an "inward teacher" capable of communicating directly all the essential knowledge man might need (in the scholastics even to a complete revelation

of Scripture) led, as was natural, to a disparagement of the value of normal learning and a neglect of the ordinary educational facilities. Although the scholastics had given formal learning a very subsidiary place in the scale of human attainments,, they, nevertheless, were able, by the educational and cultural equipment with which they entered the movement, the better to interpret that movement to the world. If the early leaders appear to have taken very much of their mystical experience for granted, it was very likely because they were unconsciously possessed of a background against which they could see many things in a clear light, and in a way which those after them were unable to do. That background provided them with a standard by which they could judge of the worth of much of their own experience before giving it a place in their messages. The quietist had no such background because he surrendered two of the creative conditions of it - educational content and directed thinking. By his withdrawal from so much that is normal in social life he alienated the stream of experience which broadens the mind and enlarges the understanding. When, towards the end of the 18th. century, he saw the need for some scholastic preparation the outcome in the schools established was " a contracted and restricted life" that " missed some of the finest features

(1)
of an all-round education."

It is not often that an individual can disassociate his conscious cognition from the subject matter of his religious life; any such division is more apparent than real, for a unity will be established in the subliminal region or a strain will be set up. The Quietist by his willed restriction of his ability to meditate upon certain ideas made more possible that association of the elements of his thought on the lower levels of consciousness. The increased content of the mind, produced by the application of the intelligence to the subject matters of education, demands greater effort to attain a unified outlook upon life. Again and again a shallow religious sentimentality is dissipated by the entrance of such matters into the realm of attention and this reveals the inability of the subject to make the necessary adjustments. If the Quaker of the Quietist period had sought through educational measures for the enlarged knowledge essential to a more reasonable explanation of his faith, he would have found it necessary to modify or reformulate something of it. It is to the lack of that education that some hold we must assign the reason for Quakerism's decline, but its continued absence is to be recognized as an outward evidence

of Quietism's influence, and the agreed interpretation of the "Inner Light" doctrine. John Bunyan writing to his wife in 1738 said, in reference to a Quaker named Martin, (1)
 "...he is a good scholar, which Quakers rarely are."

While these early Friends disparaged formal education and withdrew themselves from many of the normal activities of the social milieu to within a more confined circle, they gave an increased attention to the books of the Scholastics. The writings of Penn, Penington, and Barclay, became the authoritative works of this period and Quietism found its justification and reasoning in an emphasis upon certain elements of the teaching of these men. That the Apology of Barclay was enjoying a position of some importance can be seen from the opposition it aroused in a man like Wesley, who would hardly have bothered mentioning it if it had been without any contemporary significance. We are told that in London in 1745 he noticed that there were " numbers who were (2)
 largely in love with that solemn trifle." The Quakers never formulated their generally accepted views in the form of an agreed creed, and it is from such works as were so widely read and circulated as the Apology that we can discover their viewpoints. Barclay himself had been greatly influenced by the Continental Quietism which had assumed such a widespread

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1. Stephen Hobhouse: William Law and 18th.cent.Quakerism;p.93.
 2. R.M.Jones: The Later Periods of Quakerism: vol.i: p.269.

position towards the end of the 17th. century. The three great Continental leaders of Quietism were all contemporaries and their works had an extensive circulation. There was Molinos (1628 - 1696) the Spanish Quietist who published an important work on the subject entitled "The Spiritual Guide"; Madame Guyon (1648 - 1717) who was responsible for creating an interest in Quietism at the French Court itself, and whose views were clearly expressed in her books - "Autobiography," "Spiritual Torrents," "The Short and Easy Method of Prayer." Her main idea was that of a centre of man's spiritual life which is of God and is, by its very nature, ever seeking to be united with its source and thus gives man a spiritual impetus towards God. That progress is impeded by sin and its operations, which oppose this essential need of the Christian. There was also Fenelon (1651 - 1715) who published his famous work "Maxims of the Saints of the Inner Life" (Explication des Maximes des Saints sur la Vie Interieure) in 1697. Thomas à Kempis' book, "The Imitation of Christ" was also a formative influence, for it is a manual which can be used for the creation of the Quietist attitude, and had a widespread circulation in the 17th. century. All these were exerting a great influence upon European thought when Penn was travelling on the Continent and Barclay, who studied at Paris and was for a time attracted

by the idea of becoming a Roman Catholic priest, was brought into contact with the movement. Barclay's mind had been regimented by his Continental studies and Calvinistic background before he was won over to Quakerism, and he never liberated himself from the habits of thought which such a background had engendered. His able Apology, though an excellent attempt to interpret Quaker positions to the world of thinking men, failed in that it was essentially an attempt at the difficult task of formulating in terms of theological reasoning what was subjective and ineffable. He himself may not have intended that any portion of his writings should have been used to substantiate a narrowing down of the whole field of religious activity to a subjective quietist approach, but certain of his views readily lent themselves to the support of such a tendency.

Barclay implied that one of the conditions for experiencing the operation of the "Inner Light" was that of mental passivity. By producing a condition of mental vacuity he believed that the reception of the Light was "not resisted,"⁽¹⁾ and the corrupt nature of man was made inoperative. The theory of "moral depravity" was an impediment to the progress of the Quaker thinker for nearly two hundred years,

1. The Apology: p.93.

and if, perhaps, Barclay had been free from Calvinistic influence and quietist learning, he might have given an impetus by his virile thinking to Quaker thought which would have fulfilled the early promise of the the mystics of becoming the vehicle of a transforming spirit in ecclesiastical and theological matters.

The man seeking to know the work of the "Inner Light" and the consequent state of spiritual emancipation, will only do so when he does not seek it " by any acting, moving, or working of his own...." ⁽¹⁾ Barclay did not believe that any spiritual power arose out of the nature of the individual; spiritual power took its rise in an external source. In so far as spiritual life was manifested in certain seemingly spontaneous ideas these were introduced, not originated, into man's soul. Man is of a completely opposite origin and substance to the Light, and between the two there can be no unification possible. This "divine principle" is not "any part of man's nature" and it is " a distinct ⁽²⁾ separate thing from man's soul..." so that to submit oneself to its influence is "not by man's working, but ⁽³⁾ by his not contrary working."

Penington was in agreement with this interpretation of man's inner condition and the necessity for a passive

1. Apology ; p.94

2. ibid p.101

3. ibid p.104.

receptive meditation made possible by a suspension, as far as was possible, of the operations of the cognitive faculties and the suppression of conscious will. He placed an emphasis upon the need for quiet waiting. We read:-⁽¹⁾

"...and therefore men are to wait for the shining of his pure heavenly light in their hearts."

And also:-

"Therefore a man must watch, and wait, and fear..⁽²⁾"

Penn very succinctly stated his idea thus:-

"Wherefore stand still in thy mind, wait to feel something that is divine, to prepare and dispose thee to worship God truly and acceptably. And this taking up the cross, and shutting the doors and windows of the soul against everything that would interrupt the attendance upon God...."

If the Quaker was very non-communicative with the other members of society, if he was prone to silence in meeting, he nevertheless became verbose in setting down his religious experiences in the writing of his journals. Many of these records show traces of the unusual psychical character of their authors. No doubt the long periods of quiet abstraction to which they submitted themselves tended, by throwing features that in others might be normal aspects of mental life into prominence, to make them appear to be of unique type. These journals were used extensively, and composed an important part of the Quaker literary force.

1. Pennington's works: vol. iv. pp. 33, 110.

2. Penn: No Cross, No Crown: p. 63.

We have record upon record of the unusual intuitive guidance that these men experienced, and it was based on an ability not simply confined to a receptivity to direction regarding the ordinary matters of their lives and service, but a greatly enhanced sensibility regarding the lives and problems of others. This doctrine of the "Inner Light" made them deal more openly and directly with the faults of those within the fold because they were convinced that to allow a member to go on unchecked in some course of conduct or thinking inimical to their way of thinking, to the work of the Light within, was to be remiss in their duty to that Light and therefore to the (I) call of God himself. We are told concerning one man that:-

" Samuel Emlen of Philadelphia (1730 - 1799) was considered by many in his day to be a seer. He was remarkably favoured with insight into character and conditions of life, and he was so unerring in his revelations that many persons were afraid to meet him for fear that he would see through them and uncover the secrets of their lives."

Whilst Fox and the Scholastics had recognized the dual nature of inner experience, and had, in some instances, attributed it to either malign influences or the consequences of inherent moral depravity, or the agency of the devil, they were not in general under a sense of such a spirit of opposition to the work of the "Inner Light"

as that which characterized so much of the experience of the Quietist period. It is frequently recorded in the journals of this later time that an oppressive sense of continued opposition was often felt. Abigail Knight's
(1)
difficulty was:-

"...that when at times she endeavoured to be more gathered in her mind, the enemy got in and obstructed it; and that she found herself so weak through unwatchfulness at other times, as not to be able to withstand his suggestions."

The Quietist attitude demanded of its devotee "eternal vigilance" as the price of its enhanced subjective experience and that experience reacted upon the spiritual sensitivity of the individual, until it was a hypersensitivity to the ordinary interests which crossed the threshold of the mind. These interests were transformed, by the subjective sensitiveness, into the products of forces which were ever seeking to win the individual from his allegiance to the "Inner Light." The more intensive the desire the more keen
(2)
the apparent opposition. Isaac Sharples said:-

"And when I set my heart to seek him, I met with great inward opposition from the world, the flesh, and the Devil, who assaulted me with manifold temptations."

For some, so ineffectual appeared to be their attempts at dissociation from these things which stood for the influence

1. Thomas Wagstaffe: Piety Promoted: p.160

2. ibid p.82

of the world, that were the media of the alien forces of the inner life, that they began to attribute their failure to gain mastery over the subjective tendencies to the will of God, who in the withholding of such experience had a purpose to serve. Fanny Henshaw, with whom William Law corresponded, wrote in a spirit of
(I)
resignation:-

" But my way, as the mournful prophet expresses, was made up as with hewn stone, and all attempts to open it proved ineffectual, until it pleased infinite wisdom to favour me again with light from on high, which overcame the darkness, and in time wrought my deliverance through manifold afflictions, inward and outward....."

The quietist, because of his negative attitude to many phases of experience, experiences which to an unfettered intelligence raise questions to which answers are sought, relegates many problems to a realm of frequently unknown, unexplainable, and often ineffable double activity. He proceeds on his difficult way along the "via negativa" with his inner powers implemented by a strong faith that all is eventually for the best, even if that best can hardly be propounded in verbal form. Instead of attributing inward reverses to the vagaries of the human personality, the instability of our appreciations of human values, the intermittent operative nature of the instinctive life, the

I. Stephen Hobhouse: William Law and 18th.cent.Quakerism:p.85.

emergence of power allied to past experience, and other similar and explainable causes, the quietist attributed the inwardness and untowardness of subjective events to (1) the direct intervention of God. Fanny Henshaw said:-

" God has, for reasons best known to himself, I hope for His own glory, been pleased to permit me for a year or more to be grieved, nay even possessed with an evil spirit; whose power over me for sometime was so absolute, that it drove me to the utmost extremity and despair."

For so many during this time the acceptance of the doctrine of "Inner Light" and the quietistic implications which it now carried, meant a sense of spiritual wretchedness. The elation with which Fox had contended, apart from certain significant experiences of inward oppressiveness, had given way to a feeling of utter inferiority and uncertainty for achieving personal ascendancy over the forces of moral and (2) religious difficulty. Woolman tells us:-

" From my earliest acquaintance with Truth. I have often felt an inward distress occasioned by the striving of a spirit in me against the operation of the heavenly principle and in this circumstance have been affected with a sense of my own wretchedness....."

With such an emphasis upon individual responsibility being of paramount importance and any conception of corporate direction and control being subordinate to personal interpretation of inner states, it was to be expected that

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1. Stephen Hobhouse: William Law and 18th.cent.Quakerism:p.93
 2. A.M.Gunmere: Journal and Essays of John Woolman: p.245.

out of the resultant spiritual individualism an acute consciousness of the burden entailed in responding to the "Inner Light" became apparent. The "Inner Light" had been a unifying idea, a master sentiment, for Fox around which he had organized the whole force of his personality: from that unification a new attitude to life blossomed forth for Fox, and he was a man serving under a sense of "bondage" to the "Inner Light" that sets men free. But with these Quietist Quakers the Light was truly the source of a spiritual and mental uncertainty that made them loathe to accept the authoritative nature of their subjective experiences. (1) One writer has said:-

" This transition from the joyous confidence of the seventeenth century to the sober caution of the eighteenth century undoubtedly meant a decline in the attractive power of Quakerism."

Woolman who, in this matter, is such a great contrast to Fox wrote:- (2)

" I do not repine at having so unpleasant a task assigned me, but look with awfulness to him who appoints to his servants their respective employments and is good to all who serve him sincerely."

We see there is no spontaneous rejoicing because one has discovered himself to be possessed of such a directing innate agency; there is no spirit of adventure in gladly accepting the responsibility of the Light: it is now:- (3)

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1. H.G.Wood: Living Issues in Religious Thought: p.165
 2. A.M.Gunmere: Journal and Essays of John Woolman: p.233
 3. ibid; p.396.

" ...only through humble waiting on the inward guidance of truth that we may reasonably hope to walk safely..."

And so utterly has Woolman resigned himself to this Light, so impossible is it that he himself might initiate something in accordance with God's will, so comprehensive is God's authority, that all that is left to the author (1) is obedience. Woolman records:-

" I cannot form a concern, but when a concern cometh, I endeavour to be obedient."

The "Inner Light" was not, for Woolman, and the many others like him, the condition of a continuing and progressive spiritual sense leading the person along a path of increasing self-realization, and by a gradual unfolding of latent spiritual and psychical possibilities making for an enlarged appreciation of the significance of life on the basis of its known potentialities, seeing sin primarily as a condition^a state of thwarted possibilities..But it was recognition of the possession of a spiritual monitor whose every mood must be respected, whose every word tested, and, because of its uncertainty of direction, whose every deviation from an expected norm of operation, was to be regarded with awe, forboding^e, and fear. Sarah Tuke tells how, when she was unmistakably called to exercise her gift for ministry, from the resulting tension, between dislike of it and imperative nature of the call, she suffered

" ...for a time enduring a state of agony..." (1)

And John Yearly "describing his first impression of a call to the ministry says that he took it as a temptation of the devil." (2)

Thomas Shillitoe, author of one of the Journals to which reference has already been made, stated:- (3)

"about the 24th.year of my age my mouth was first opened in this awful work."

With this imputing of the primary initiation of inward spiritual activity to a transcendent God, whose intervention as seen in the intermittent nature of the Light's working, was the outcome of his will only being partially realizable by man, man could adopt no other method of approach than the passive one helped by meetings of more or less silent worship. Silence was one more method by which the Quaker thus sought to attain that passivity which made possible the use of himself as an instrument by God. Woolman says (4)
he was taught:-

" ...to wait in silence sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature to stand like a trumpet through which the Lord speaks to his flock." (5)

And also:-

" We were taught by renewed experience to labour for an inward stillness, at no time to seek for words....."

1. A.N.Brayshaw: The Quakers:p.224. 2. ibid

3. ibid p.226

4. A.M.Gunmere: Journal and Essays of John Woolman: p.160

5. ibid p.172.

Such a passive waiting, tempered by introspective intensity, often led to an ecstatic experience that became, for some of the Quietists, an added authority for their method of worship. (1)
 Many were able to testify as Whitefield did, of whom we read:-

" He now had much sensible devotion, and was filled with unspeakable raptures, sometimes ' carried out beyond himself'."

There can be no doubt that this passive seeking after inner satisfactions was greatly encouraged by the very large circulation of the works of William Law (1686-1761). His "Serious Call" was published in 1726 and established his fame as a writer of devotional literature. Law, who was of a mystical temperament, did not give much countenance by any direct encouragement to the Quakers, but about 1734 he became very much interested in the works of Jacob Boehme, the German mystic, and from that time forward we can trace out in his published works the results of that favourable influence. How far he went in the direction of mysticism (2)
 can be seen in such an apt quotation as the following:-

" Seek for Him in thy heart, and thou wilt never seek in vain, for there He dwells, there is the seat of His Light and Holy Spirit. For this turning to the Light and Spirit of God within thee is thy only true turning unto God; there is no other way of finding Him but in that place where He dwelleth in thee."

1. James P. Gledstone: George Whitefield, M.A. p.7.
 2. R.M. Jones: The Later Periods of Quakerism: vol. i: p.262.

Whitefield, who was greatly influenced by Law's "Serious Call", and other of his writings, bore testimony to the quietistic tendency of contemporary mysticism, for of him we are told that it was following this mystical inclination

"which brought him to the low levels of Quietism, where he nearly perished.." (1)

Cannot we see here that the method by which a man reduced his native energy, and prostrated his own individual spirit, in the attempt to induce a state of hypersensitiveness, is as likely to produce a reaction of depression in some as of elation in others? Sadhu Sunder Singh could submit to a fast and reduce himself to such a point of physical weakness that he could hardly raise a hand, and yet in such a state had his most authentic mystical experiences. John Haslam, (2) a Friend, who died in 1773, said:-

" He had a clear discerning of the heavenly gift imparting something to a friend. He knew it to be so, but that it was possible to be depressed too low for the gift."

Whitefield felt that to attain to the desired condition of spiritual blessing it was necessary to destroy any operation of the will which would impede a thoroughly passive mental and spiritual receptiveness. We are informed (3) that he carried this to extreme lengths, and that:-

" Mortification next required the discontinuance

1. James P. Gledstone: George Whitefield, M.A.: p. 14

2. Thomas Wagstaffe: Piety Promoted: p. 14

3. as no. 1. p. 19.

of a diary which he kept, and also abstinence from the use of forms and even audible speech in prayer, and cessation from works of mercy."

The early Friends had opposed the ministrations of the clergy because it was a paid ministry, and they had felt it was an inconsistency to receive salary for proclaiming what was freely given by God. They did not repudiate the truth which such men preached, nor did they assert that that same type of ministry was without value. The Quietist, however, went so far as often to deny the value or necessity of any outward service designed to help the individual in his search after God. This was not a general attitude by any means, but in the attitude of some it revealed the extreme tendency of imputing all power to the operation of an unfettered and unimpeded "Inner Light." John Fisher, (1) who died in 1785, said:-

"...that whatsoever was to be known of God was made manifest in man, and....he had not sent Bishop.... but had come and touched him himself, and done the work for him."

The possession of such an innate divine emanation became the basis for Christian affection and fellowship: one was not drawn to another because of the attraction of human personality, but because "the seed which is in bondage" gave a spiritual significance to the person which otherwise

I. Thomas Wagstaffe: Piety Promoted: p.95.

it did not possess. That possession was, however, to be the constant controller of every manifestation of the inner life; it was the governor set upon the mechanism and operations of the psychic life. Thomas Ross said he was:-⁽¹⁾

"...careful in his ministry not to go beyond his guide."

In the examination of the explanations of the "Inner Light" given by the Quietists we discover that they used many terms to which the early "publishers of truth" had attached meanings descriptive of their experiences. The prolific experiences of these early quakers had given rise to the use of many symbolic terms, but terms which had had active meaning were now used by these 18th. century quakers in connection with experiences of a passive character. The favourite term of this period was, as formerly, that of Light with the same adjectives. It is the "Divine Light" and the "Pure Light."

The Quietist claims to be independent of the objective methods whereby others seek information and the development of intelligence; and he also believes that he can afford to ignore the usual channels through which others gain spiritual enlightenment and inspiration. He holds to this view because he believes that with an inner principle of spiritual activity he can, of himself, discover the "Truth" whenever he wills it. "God's witness in the mind and heart of man, ever produces the

I. Thomas Wagstaffe: Piety Promoted: p.120.

most beneficial effects" because it is "the principle of
 light and truth."⁽¹⁾ So often Truth is regarded as something
 having substantial form and existence and able, without
 any reference to the questions of an existing harmony of
 life and thought in the recipient, to reveal itself in the
 inner life of the individual. Of one lady we read:-⁽²⁾ "She
 gave up in obedience to the visitations of Truth in her
 own mind."

Frequently these Quakers made reference to their
 work of ministry and exhortation as being an attempt "to
 reach the witness of truth in the heart," and the failure
 of anyone to respond was attributed to their failure to be
 "convinced of the principle of truth." There is no doubt
 that many of the mystics, and particularly those of a
 quietistic outlook, have subjective experiences that provide
 glimpses into realms beyond the ordinary perceptive faculties
 of the mind. It would be the reception of such intuitively
 gained knowledge that would be the experiential background
 for the use of such descriptive phrases as "principle of
 truth," and "Truth" applied to the doctrine of the "Inner
 Light." But many of these quietists were hardly capable
 of so analysing their own subjective experience that they
 would be brought to see that apart from such experience it

I.Y.M. Epistle for 1736: quoted in Rules of Discipline of the
 Religious Society of Friends, London, 1834: p.39.
 2. Thomas Wagstaffe: Piety Promoted: p.109.

was impossible to attribute such a character to the concept of "Inner Light." Such conceptions did not arise as the result of an intellectual interpretation of the doctrine, but to convey some sense of the varying and rich experiences which were consequent upon a development of the initial step required in accepting the doctrine. The concentration upon the facts of consciousness required by the quietism of this period would tend to bring the latent contents of the peripheral consciousness into a more central place in the attention, and this would give rise to subjective experiences which being more deeply understood could, for these people, (1) be no better explained than by saying:-

" It pleased the Father of Mercies to enlighten her understanding."

The nature of this divine emanation was such that no ulterior motive could be assigned to it; even as it was of God so it partook of his essential character. It would have been a species of blasphemy to have spoken of it in any inferior terms than were normally applied to God. If it was the witness of God in the heart of man it was best designated as the "pure witness." But that witness, as we have already seen, was not an inactive possession, but a constantly operating force in the life. The metaphors were generally

those implying an activity of the light within. The influence exerted by the Light was not that of a static element built into the character, mutely bearing witness of man's divine origin and his spiritual potentiality, but it was a constant tendency, under the essential conditions of freedom and encouragement, to a renewal and sustaining of the spiritual in man. It was the added power by which any tendency to righteousness was sufficiently reinforced to make such attainment possible. The Quietists were not given to any intensive study of the theological problems involved in their positions, but we can have little doubt that in calling for a "manifestation of the light and grace (1) within" and "the inward manifestation of his grace and Holy Spirit" they were bearing testimony to the spiritually recuperative power of their religious conceptions, and acknowledging the fundamental part grace played in their experience.

We have noted before the extensive use made by the Friends of the word "principle." We read so often of the "principle of truth"; "the divine principle"; "the inward principle"; "the principle of divine life"; but the word is not used in the sense of a categorical definition by which the fundamental religious life, as it expressed itself in varying forms, could be analysed into its components, but as a prior condition of

all aspects of the inner life. It was not the use of the word "principle" as indicative of a motive in life, and, therefore, as such amenable to all the changes in the character and purposes of a developing inner life. The word was used of the original and irreducible character of one's religious nature. From this "principle" all other moral and religious qualities sprang. John Woolman expressed the meaning of his use of the word when he wrote:-⁽¹⁾

"and was early convinced in my mind that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the creator, and learn to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men, but also toward the brute creatures. That as the mind was moved by an inward principle to love God as an invisible Incomprehensible being, by the same principle it was moved to love him in all his manifestations in the visible world."

From such an expression we perceive that the word principle was descriptive of an inner condition arising from the existence within of some divine emanation which, by its effect on the faculties, produced a sensibility to meanings and purposes, which made a reaction on the part of man to any expression of such qualities in nature normal and favourable to his own conception of God. Though the Quaker of this time denied his ordinary aesthetic faculties scope for operation, nor provided the usual interests for

I. A.M.Gunmere: Journal and Essays of John Woolman: p.156.

the diversion of the same, though he sought to express the rigidity of his religious life in austere denials of certain capacities for appreciation, he would, nevertheless, react, in his subconscious life, to those experiences in his daily contact with the world with which these capacities were normally connected. Something of this subconscious experience would emerge into the conscious life, but he would more likely attribute it to the operation of the "Inner Light" than to any inherent love of the beautiful, personal regard for form and proportion, or the recognition, on his part, of the attractiveness of order and sequence in the natural world. The sense of inward contact, which would arise as a consequence of the functioning of the aesthetic awareness, was described by Elizabeth Holme (d.1781) as:- ⁽¹⁾ "...the efficacy of the divine principle which she herself had felt." Many, no doubt, felt that in the character of these inner experiences the mind itself played some part and could not be entirely separated from them, but they still continued to believe that the ordinary mental life of man was corrupt. This difficulty was overcome by some, as Elizabeth Holme, by attributing certain experiences to the working of what they called "pure mind." This "pure mind" would become a receptive agent, but of what? It could not be anything connected with the facts of objective experience because they were connected with the "carnal mind." Whatever of spiritual consequence was

received from a supernatural source was of an entirely other-world character. If by the operation of the normal cognitive faculties something of the wisdom of the world could be perceived, by the presence of a "pure mind" a receptiveness to the incoming of something of the wisdom of the realm of the spirit was possible. The experience of the mystic, which so often carries something of a noetic quality, was therefore attributed to the "dawnings of Divine wisdom."⁽¹⁾ These intimate experiences which led the Quietist to refer to the "Inner Light" by such terms as "pure mind", "life", "virtue", "wisdom", etc., were so often of such ecstatic quality that a complete use of the terms of human intimacy and affection followed. The mystic accepts for usage all the current terms of his own daily intercourse and experience, but by an entirely different association and a changed content gives them an entirely sublimated meaning. The use of such expressions as "the gracious abounding of Divine love"⁽²⁾ and "his dear Son the minister of their own sanctuary in their own hearts"⁽³⁾ is an evidence of how warm was so much of the experience to which abstract terms were so often applied.

With the advent of the Reformation the Bible had become available to the ordinary man for reading and study:

1. Thomas. Wagstaffe: Piety Promoted: p.33

2. ibid p.40

3. ibid p.42.

the Reformation had placed it in the position of paramount authority for the guidance of the religious life; it was, for many, the only "rule of faith." Reverence for the sacred scriptures was a characteristic of many religiously minded people and led to a knowledge of it by ordinary people which was unusual. The first "publishers of truth" had a masterly grasp of biblical knowledge. When, however, the Quaker attacked the view that there was an inherent power in the Word as such, derived from its verbal inspiration, he had to attribute much of that resident power, which he denied as the product of Scripture, to that which was for him the primary essential - the "Inner Light." That "Inner Light" by which alone a man could really understand Scripture was productive of all those "fruits of the spirit" of scriptural record. He must not have been conscious that he was making any such transference of power, but it is to be observed that whatever the animating spirit of Scripture had done, the "Inner Light" was now doing. He had no need to return to the Bible for any words of prophecy, he could do that and be edified, for the "Inner Light" operating as the direct agency for producing verbal testimony gave utterance to words which often were a prevision of the future. George Fox not only

had visions, akin to many recorded in the Bible, but was able to speak words with a future reference, and during the Quietist period this remained true of many ministers. We read of one, John Smith, speaking in a meeting in 1764,
 (1)
 that:-

" ...he had seen in the true light that the Lord would bring forth his people from that worldly spirit into which so many had degenerated and that his faithful servants must go through great and heavy exercises before this work was brought about."

If so much of the working of the "Inner Light" was understood because something of the nature of divine gift was appreciated, it also remains to be said that again and again it was felt to exercise such a compelling authority that against native caution missions were undertaken in response to some felt demand. Woolman said, concerning
 (2)
 the Indians, that:-

" ...the Holy Ghost wrought on some hearts to edification where all the words were not understood,"

and he himself engaged in work, in response to a sense of divine guidance, which he did not fully understand or appreciate.

It is implied in much that we read that the miracles in scriptural record did not arise solely because of the unique power of Jesus, were not alone attributable to

1. A.M. Gunmere: Journal and Essays of John Woolman: p.267.
 2. ibid p.261.

the use of Jesus by God as a medium for an application to the individual of divine power, their possibility was not solely in the willingness of the subject to express faith, but were possible because in the possession of an emanation from the source of all such wonderful power, The ability of Jesus, the faith of the person, made more likely the response of that inner life to the challenge presented by Jesus. The many healings by the early Quaker leaders were assigned to such a belief as this. The "Inner Light" was, if given scope, capable of exercising a therapeutic ministry, not only as an effect exercised upon one person by another, and witnessed to by some seen change, but (I) within the life of the individual himself. Woolman said:-

" Where the pure life is kept to and meetings for discipline are held in the authority of it, we find by experience that they are comfortable, and tend to the health of the body...."

The "Inner Light" was, for some, of such a nature that it was ever seeking to realize itself in action; it became an urge to activity and gave rise to much spasmodic effort. "Concerns" not only came to these men and women as they sat in silence seeking to make their minds receptive and their wills plastic; these "concerns" were often sudden uprisings of ideas, perhaps they were attributable to the maturing of some consideration in the subconscious or the

emergence of an idea which in the subliminal had been waiting an opportunity for expression in the conscious life. They did, however, come to men as they were engaged in the fields, in the shops, at home, doing the business of the day, and, such was their nature, they tried to immediately carry out the instructions of such a "concern." This guidance within called for a complete resignation of the self to its purposes and the typical quietistic attitude made it more easy to do this than otherwise.

Before leaving this phase of our subject we should, in passing, note the views of Woolman, who exercised such an extensive and deep influence upon the Society's thinking, upon the extent of the "Inner Light" manifestation. It was, from the very beginning, a cherished belief that the "Inner Light" was that which "lighteneth every man" and that universality of divine dispensation created a brotherhood of man on the basis of the spiritual fatherhood of God. Woolman, however, said that "it hath pleased the divine being to people the earth by inhabitants descended from
(1) man" and that this, which he accepted as a biological fact, constituted a blood brotherhood. We are thus one family
(2) with the added bond of a spiritual linking. We read:-

1. A.M.Gunmere: Journal and Essays of John Woolman: p.397.
2. ibid p.398.

" The inhabitants of the earth have often appeared to me as one great family consisting of various parts, divided by great waters, but united in one common interest, that is, in living righteously according to that light and understanding, wherein Christ doth enlighten every man that cometh into the world."

Woolman was a man of large understanding and informed sympathy, and in the matter of appreciating the problems of education was an advanced thinker. While others made the bestowal of the Light universal without reference to mental ability, Woolman held it to be co-terminous with the capacity for thought. Older people had great need to be careful in their attitude to children, for often by unthinking disregard of budding wisdom they retarded the child's awareness of the character of his inner nature. There is great wisdom in such simple statements as the following:- (I)

" The divine light which enlightens all men, I believe, does often shine in the minds of children very early; and to humbly wait for wisdom that our conduct toward them may tend to forward their acquaintance with it, and strengthen them in obedience thereto, appears to me to be a duty on all of us."

" Instruction, thus administered, reaches the pure witness in the minds of such children who are not hardened, and begets Love in them toward those who thus lead them on. "

Thus the teaching of children was not fulfilling its true mission if it was satisfied with only implanting the recognized formal knowledge of accepted educational standards;

its final objective was the creation in the child of an understanding of the significance of the possession of intelligence and a realization of the essential nature of our spiritual characteristics. That awareness is not brought into being by the simple possession of pedagogical capability, but by the exercise of one's spiritual influence upon those he seeks to instruct. Better results are achieved by an intensive application to a few than a modified impact upon a larger number. Woolman wrote words which, as a basis for educational procedure and moral development of children, are as applicable to-day as when they were first written. We read:-

" But where a man hath charge of a number too great for the degree of strength with which the Lord hath endowed him, he not only suffers as to the state of his own mind, but the children suffer also, and government not being supported in the true Christian spirit, the pure witness is not reached in the minds of the children."

We have already observed how afraid the Quietist, indeed the Quaker of the first period also, was of formulating any doctrine by the use of his reasoning faculties- his carnal mind. Again and again we have had to note this concern. Anything bordering upon a theological organization of thought was taboo, although in their ignorance of what was implied in the use of that term and the science of thought

to which it belonged, much matter of a definitely theological character, such as Barclay's Apology, was accepted for guidance. They were more afraid of phrases which by long usage and association carried the suggestion of the moribund thought of static theology. Instead of taking the vocabulary of theology for the expression of a virile faith they created their own vocabulary. But in eschewing the externals of theological thought they indeed lost much that would have helped them in dealing with problems which arose out of their unique assertions. For them religious life and truth were to be based upon an experiential knowledge, but they often failed to appreciate that much of the truth expressed in the creeds, in what they termed "notions", was that which had first been enshrined in experience. It was not the consistency of thought which made a theory attractive, but its apparent connection with some state of the life within. Job Scott (1) (d.1793) said:-

" If thou dost not feel it, it is nothing."

And when he came to treat of the nature of Grace he contended that it could not be of reality until it was allied to the individual's experience. It has no existence in relation to an individual until it "becomes quick, lively

1. Rufus M. Jones: The Later Periods of Quakerism: vol.1:p.290.

and operative, and quickens the soul to a sensibility." They were frequently incapable of translating religious formulations into the spiritual factors that had been, in the first place, the primary reasons for the same. It was to be expected that with this attitude towards formal theology the literary productions of the time would do little to elucidate the philosophical and religious problems involved in any attempt to understand man's relations with God and Christ. Many writings, which had a large circulation among Friends at this time, no doubt promoted personal religious zeal and piety, and yet gave no insight into those questions concerning doctrine which, then as now, exercise the minds of thinking people.

There can be little doubt that this emphasis upon the experiential basis of religious truth, to the exclusion of any deep and thorough-going investigation of the intellectual problems involved, led to a neglect of certain questions at this time which, creating a paucity of authoritative literature, made more unlikely the attraction of intelligent people to the Quaker position. The greatest lack was in the failure to link Quakerism up to the great historic movements of thought and to show how, from the Quaker standpoint, it was not only a return to what was termed "New Testament Christianity", but also a normal development in time. They

withdrew themselves, by an emphasis upon the all-inclusive nature of the "Inner Light", from the supports to faith which are to be found in the continuity of thought and practise and the abiding truth to which they bear witness. This disregard of the historic nature of religious faith may have arisen from the failure to relate their mystic experiences to the historic life of Jesus. Whatever value innate experience, unrelated to the great facts of historic revelation, may have men and women, seeking reasons for that experience and desiring to strengthen their sense of personal allegiance, will return again and again to a study of the objective historical phenomena of religion. Both innate experience and historical knowledge furnish authoritative material for the religious life, but any undue emphasis upon one to the derogation of the other inevitably leads to some maladjustment in that life. Men and women were attracted to Quakerism by the piety and practical zeal of which it gave abundant evidence, but were repelled by its sterile thought on the great questions. As long as there were those leaders of dynamic personality and great enthusiasm, much zeal could be generated which would not reveal any great need for theological enquiry, but when those men were removed by death the movement was then in

great need of a thoroughly consistent scheme of belief. Lacking such formulations they were driven inwards to the one basis of their convictions, the possession of the
(I)
"Inner Light." It has been well stated that:-

" At first it was enough to know that there is one, even Jesus Christ, who speaks to the soul's condition; but it soon became necessary to elaborate and explain this inner Light, to show its relation to the Christ of history, and to explain how the soul's immediate revelation squares with the great fact of revelation in scripture."

It was necessary to show the relationship subsisting between the inner ground of spiritual revelation and the historic person of Jesus because any approximation of the former to an emanation of the latter, with all its powers and characteristics, left the average person with an irreconcilable duality - the Christ within and the Christ of Scripture. The implications of trinitarian thought would be harmonized on the grounds of experiential knowledge, but the time-spatial relationships of the problem of an ever present immanent Jesus exercising all the virtues claimed by the gospel of the external historic person, and also of that person, could not be solved on such grounds. Job Scott, who came from Rhode Island and died in 1793, wrote just prior to his
(2)
death and while on a mission to England:-

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1. Rufus M. Jones: The Later Periods of Quakerism: p.275.
 2. S.M. Janney: The Separation: p.87.

" I trust I as firmly believe in the Divinity of Christ as any man living, but I have no more belief that there are two divinities than two Gods."

Many were the attempts to make such a reconciliation of these two aspects of the Quakers' christological problem, but no satisfactory solution was forthcoming during the Quietist period. This failure, as we shall see, was one of the causes which led later on to an emphasis upon the necessity for an acceptance of the positions of the new Evangelicalism. To something of this inability to establish a satisfactory relationship between the personal and historic elements of the religious revelation we can attribute the Quakers' unwillingness to accept any doctrine of imputed righteousness. The righteousness of Jesus was that which he had achieved in the flesh, and though an evidence of his divinity and the seal of God's spirit upon his life, it was not such that it could, by virtue of the presence of Jesus as the "Inner Light," be put to the credit of man. Their difficulty was in establishing a total connection between the Light which was in the world from the beginning and the virtue which that Light incarnate as Jesus won in conflict with the world of man's passion and temptations. The Quaker was prepared to accept the possibility of the possession, because of the condition of potential innate divinity, of all

those powers exhibited by the historic Christ, but not to accept any imputation of virtue derived from that historic revelation. But, and it cannot be over-emphasised, the Quietist acknowledgement of the final nature, for him, of religious revelation being personal led him to be very circumspect in dealing with his own life. It did, naturally, lead to morbid introspection and spiritual isolation, but it also secured an emphasis upon the need for a consistent life within the narrow limits it set. John Woolman (I) expressed it thus:-

" When a people dwell under the liberal distribution of favours from heaven, it behoves them carefully to inspect their ways, and consider the purposes for which those favours were bestowed lest, through forgetfulness of God, and misusing his gifts, they incur his heavy displeasure whose judgments are just and equal, who exalteth and humbleth to the dust as he sees meet."

While one may note the outstanding features of any definite historical period, and delineate the characteristic ideas and views of a particular religious movement in that time, it is not correct to assert that within the confines of that delineation the total impact of the group upon contemporary life, and the full intellectual and spiritual expression of its adherents, has been encompassed. A movement like that of Quakerism in the Quietist period, as in any other, reveals many facets of its character, which

cannot be classified, in alternating moods and attitudes. It can, however, be claimed that what we have expressed in the foregoing pages was in general true of the Quakers during the eighteenth century. They withdrew, by a disregard thereof, from the challenge to thought and life presented to them by the intellectual and philosophical movements of the time. During the first half of this century the religious situation was more or less stabilized and nothing arose powerful enough to arouse religious people from their lethargy and complacency, both of which moods had fallen like a blight on Quakerism. But beneath the placid surface forces were gathering which eventually shook the life of the country into wakefulness. It has been said:-

" ...that the difference between the first half and the second half of the eighteenth century is comparable with the difference between mental stability and mental instability,"

or that the transition was one

" ...from an age of reason to an age of passion." (2)

Whatever might be our judgment on the character of this change which the end of the century witnessed, the spearhead of these forces of transition, insofar as the quietist mood of Quakerism was affected, was to be found in the Evangelical Revival initiated by the Wesleys. Although the full force

I. Sydney G. Dimond: The Psychology of the Methodist Revival: p.37

2. *ibid* p.38.

of this movement was retarded in its influence upon the Quakers by the strength of quietism, it did finally play the greater part in dissipating that religious mood; and also bringing to a close this fairly clearly demarcated period in Quaker life and thought.

CHAPTER FIVE

The dominant attitudes and interpretations
during the time of the Separations, and the
divisive influence of Evangelicalism.

In bringing our study of the Quietist period to a close we noted how that condition had become possible by the gradual decline of the enthusiastic spirit of the "first publishers of truth," and the emergence of a close adherence to the minutiae of a traditional rule of faith and practise. The Society had had sufficient time to become, by the processes of conventional piety and of religious formality, a group influenced by a more or less subconscious attitude of mind to certain phases of belief and conduct. This development had been greatly encouraged by the isolation of the group from the normal life of Society, and the emergence of an introspectiveness which made more difficult a reasoned outlook upon life and religion in general. We read in the minutes of the
(I)
Bolton Meeting for 1789:-

" Queries were read and answered. Nothing to remark only some drowsiness which we hope will be guarded against."

That passage might well stand as a description of the state of the Society at the beginning of the 19th. century; it was drowsy intellectually and religiously. The doctrine of the "Inner Light" was held implicitly as part of the received truth of the past, but no thorough-going attempt to propagate and explain it in the great world outside was

being made.

Under these conditions, however, the Quakerism of the time could not remain; the Quaker could not abide as an isolated centre of lethargy in a sea of changing moods and temper. In spite of all the difficulties and disabilities under which the Dissenters laboured they were very earnest and active. In the ten years, 1731 - 1740, 448 Dissenting meeting places were registered, but so widespread became its influence that in the decade 1791 -
(1)
1800 no less than 4394 meeting places were registered. With this increased numerical strength and widespread religious activity of Dissent there went also an increased anxiety to investigate the questions concerning belief which, through the years, had been tacitly accepted. The Quaker, and in this he was akin to most religious persons of the time, had been accustomed to express his beliefs in the scriptural terms which had carried a single, and often narrow, connotation. That meaning, because often held to partake of the sacrosanct nature of Scripture, was hardly ever questioned. Now, however, many questions were publicly discussed under the liberal influence of religious toleration, and, also, as a result of the reaction of the French Revolution. The authorities under which the State and the Church had been

established were questioned, and in such enquiries the religious postulations came in for their share. It was felt that in such times the old authorities for life and conduct were the best, but they called for an intelligent allegiance. The constant wars from 1776 to 1815 drove men and women to seek for some deeper satisfaction than that which hitherto had been found in traditional belief and practise. Once more religious men were seeking a message that could be forcibly expressed and become a challenge to individual complacency. Such a felt necessity generally produces a strong evangelical tendency in doctrinal expressions and forces to the foreground men and women of commanding personality and with exceptional zeal. We shall see later how these conditions were fulfilled in the Separations which rent Quakerism from 1820 and on.

Already we have suggested that the full influence of the Evangelical revivals, initiated by the Wesleys, was late in affecting Quakerism because of the inherited subjectiveness of Quietism. The whole social outlook at the time was as great, if not greater, a stumbling block to intercourse with movements in the more extended fields outwith the pastures of Quakerism. Joseph Gurney Bevan, a Quaker of scholastic attainments, wrote in 1800 :-

" We are just considered as a good sort of people in

I. A. Neave Brayshaw: The Quakers: p.168.

the main who refuse to fight and swear and to pay tithes; and while the improved manners of the age allow that for these and other singularities we ought not to be molested, the public in general cares little further about us and seldom enquires a reason for the hope that is in us."

One can hardly wonder at the indifference of the world at large to the message of Quakerism at this time. It had done everything possible to make itself into an isolated and select society. It was not the strangeness of dress or manners that produced a feeling in the general mind that the Quaker was well satisfied if he was left alone, but the known fact that in joining the Quakers one was giving adherence to a group that in certain matters was as iron-bound and intolerant as the Roman Catholic Church. An adherent joining the Quakers was, by that act, cut away from religious fellowship with his non-Quaker relatives and friends. Disownment for marrying-out was carried to such lengths that the Society was in danger of extinction by this one thing. Such a method produced intermarrying among Quaker families to such a degree that in many meetings the constituents were more like a family gathering than a free group gathered out of the general public. This also tended in some meetings to give a distinctive social superiority to the membership. In 1852 a young man, Francis James Harker, on marrying-out, resigned from the

membership of the Bacup meeting. We quote from his letter
 (I)
 of resignation:-

"One cause of my looking for a wife from amongst those not in membership with Friends, is a prudential one. The daughters of Friends are mostly brought up with the notions of affluence and ease and a style of living not consonant with that of a working tradesman. I am but young and may have erred in judgment in this respect....."

There was at the beginning of the century a rising tide of feeling against such disownments, and one of the last cases was that of Priscilla Bright, the sister of John Bright, which took place in 1849. John Bright records the disownment proceedings in his journal with a fulness of sentiment that in that place he rarely displayed. We can
 (2)
 sense his burning indignation when we read:-

" To-day my dear sister Priscilla was disowned on the ground of her marriage contrary to the rules or practises of the Society. I protested against this course as unjust to her and injurious to the Society. But our Monthly Meeting seems to be unable to perceive any distinction in cases.....The Society may well not extend. It is withering to almost nothing. Its glorious principles are made unsightly to the world. Its aspect is made repulsive. It keeps out multitudes by the imposition of tests and observances which can never be of real importance....."

The spirit of isolating Quakerism by such methods was, however, in process of receiving a great set-back in the emergence, at the beginning of the 19th. century, among

1. J. Travis Mills: John Bright and the Quakers: vol.1:p.439.
 2. ibid vol.1: p.277.

Quakers of a developed sense of social awareness and responsibility. It was not a new attitude among Quakers, for Fox himself was possessed of a passionate desire for social righteousness, but it was unique at this time because its appeal was more widespread among the membership.

Joseph Pease, who was the first Quaker to enter Parliament, had to overcome great parental opposition in attaining his political aspirations. His father, Edward Pease, represented the orthodox Quaker attitude and tried every possible way to persuade his son to withdraw his name as a candidate for Parliamentary honours. Joseph, writing (I) to his brother John in 1832, said:-

"my beloved and honoured father....made several affectionate remarks....he expressed his decided opinion that unless I was wholly regardless of all parental counsel, the advice of all my best friends, the domestic happiness of my family, my duties as a husband and a parent, and a member of the Society of Friends, I could not for a moment entertain the idea.....to become a representative of my countrymen in Parliament...."

It was the willingness of Quakers to translate the widespread social sense into personal service through the recognized channels, of which Pease's entry into Parliament was an outstanding example, that made more possible the entry of outside influences into the Society itself. The body was becoming animated by a desire to make its contribution to

I. Alfred E. Pease: The Diaries of Edward Pease: p.65.

human well-being positive and active, and thus it began to look over the fence of its traditional exclusiveness. We observed the fervour with which John Bright condemned the disownment of his sister, and it is interesting to note his (1) experience at the Yearly Meeting of 1843. We read:-

"The Epistle, issued annually to the members of the Society of Friends by the Yearly Meeting,' writes Mrs. Boyce, in The Richardsons of Cleveland, 'is drawn up by a committee and is then read over (or was at the time she speaks) sentence by sentence to the whole assembly. The year 1843 was a time of Repeal agitation in Ireland, of distress in England; the Chartist disturbances were then recent, and the Anti-Corn Law League was in the height of its career. One sentence in the Yearly Meeting's Epistle ended with the words "We trust Friends may always be found amongst those who are quiet in the land." John Bright sprung to his feet to express a hope that this sentence was not intended to condemn those who were striving to effect the repeal of unjust laws! The Clerk rose to call the speaker to order, but before the reproof could be uttered, the young man went on, "Now the Clerk need not fear that I will introduce politics into this assembly," and proceeded to make an effective speech, in which the word "corn" did not occur, but which was in effect a defence of the action of himself and his friends. Applause is unknown in the Yearly Meeting, but a slight tapping noise was heard as John Bright resumed his seat."

The curriculum and material of a school attached to a distinctive group will often prove a reliable index to what is generally believed and done in that group, and the history of Ackworth School is a barometer showing the changing stresses and emphases of Quaker life and thought. At the beginning of the 19th. century the library of that school was composed of

books with a very limited religious outlook and confined to Quaker doctrine. When John Bright arrived there in 1822 he found on the shelves of Ackworth School Library the following
(I)
books:-

John Richardson's Journal
John Woolman's Journal
Richard Davis's Journal
Dying Sayings
Wm. Penn's Travels through Holland and Germany
John Robert's Life
Thomas Lurting's Fighting Sailor
Sewel's History

But in the classrooms of the school no such narrow attenuated interest in the great life of the world predominated, for now the scholars perused Aikins "England Delineated," Goldsmith's "History of England," "Debates on the Slave Trade", and Guthrie's "Geography." The whole situation in the Society was one of a "remarkable state of unsettlement" for the old traditions were no longer completely observed by the membership. The changes were only gradually adopted, but that there was a new spirit of liberty at work was to be seen in many ways. In the homes of Friends signs of approximation to what was normal in other houses became evident, and the rigid adherence to the Quaker dress was beginning to break down.

The Meeting for Worship during the quietist period, except when visited by some person with a "concern", had

I. J. Travis Mills: John Bright and the Quakers: vol.i:p.114.

become a silent one, but this also was being gradually modified. While Mary Jane Taylor writing in 1849 could
(1)

say:-

" For instance, when sitting in silence at Meeting, when for about two hours there is nothing to interrupt the thoughts which you cannot altogether refrain from wandering.....,"

John Bright could record in his journal, under the date
(2)
15.5.53, the following:-

" To Westminster Meeting twice. Several, perhaps too many, short sermons in the morning."

The Yearly Meeting of 1841 had tried by a direct adverse pronouncement to discourage the preparation on the part of a minister of any message that he wished to deliver. In this they were seeking to maintain the old view, but it was against a tendency that was receiving support in many directions. In the Meeting in some places the reading of Scripture and the singing of hymns was adopted as an agreed part of the service. In the United States this was carried to the length of adopting a regular order of service, and to-day with the adoption of a paid and settled ministry many of the Meetings of the U.S.A. are hardly distinguishable from other Protestant Churches.

The diary of Joseph Pease reflects this state of transition and how concerned many Friends were to see the

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1. A Dear Memory; Pages from the Letters of Mary J. Taylor: p.61.
 2. J. Travis Mills: John Bright and the Quakers: vol.ii: p.45.

innovations. Pease throughout his diary records his sorrow at the loss of simplicity in clothing and furniture, and registers his dislike of the temperance cause being prosecuted with vigour. Another evidence of this state of change within the Society was in the new attitude to the Bible as a means of general religious instruction. During the 18th. century many Quakers confined the knowledge of their children in respect to Scripture to Barclay's "Catechism and Confession of Faith." This was a "compilation of scripture texts applied to tenets of Friends." The Evangelical movement influenced the Quaker attitude in this regard and not only brought a return to the Bible and its study, but in many Quaker homes Bible reading became an established part of family devotions. Somewhere about the year 1812 the authorities of Ackworth School decided that every boy and girl on leaving should be given a Bible. The Yearly Meeting of 1857 reminded parents that:-

" Children continue to enter schools very imperfectly instructed in their moral and religious duties and lamentably ignorant of the contents of the sacred volume."

We readily see that the state of uniformity which had, more or less, characterized the Society during the first 150 years had gradually given way to a condition of changing interests and emphases, which, in turn, developed

into unsettlement. Until this time the authority of the traditional testimonies had exercised a restraining and directing influence, but in the 19th. century the weaknesses inherent in the old positions became very evident. The central doctrines had had the unifying influence, but when liberty of action and freedom of thought entered more largely into the Quaker attitude soon men were beginning to group themselves into upholders of this interpretation or that. As early as 1795 disputes broke out in Ireland, and in 1802 many were disowned for holding views contrary to what the (I) Irish meetings considered right. We are told that:-

" In the Province of Ulster, all the Elders were displaced from their station; and a considerable number of Ministers and Elders in various parts were disowned from membership."

With the advent of the Irish difficulties an age of sorrow and trouble came upon the Society, and rent its life for nearly 75 years.

It cannot be said that any particular idea had a predisposing divisive effect. It might, however, be established that the spirit of Evangelicalism prepared the ground for the welcoming of extraneous religious ideas. The early Quaker preacher had gone from house to house of known sympathizers, but in this period, especially in America, the itinerating speaker not only consorted freely with leaders

of other religious groups, but accepted the hospitality of their meeting places for the conduct of Quaker worship. The new life generated by men of evangelical zeal was not as expressible in the old terms, and consequently a welcome was given to the usage of Evangelical expressions. The Evangelical appeal was largely an emotional one and derived some of its drive from the presentation of its doctrine of Hell. The Quaker doctrine, on the other hand, had no such compelling fear as that of a vividly portrayed final punishment -the doctrine of Hell was never very widely current in Quakerism- and demanded not only introspective examination but also involved intellectual effort. The spiritual condition of the mystic is often dependent upon the degree of his meditation, an intellectual task, and failing the possession of such an ability men have sought religious satisfaction in emotional experience produced by objective forms and Evangelical procedures and ideas. The refinement of ideas which had typified the circumscribed approach of the Scholastics was absent in much of the apologetics of the Separatists. To satisfactorily embody their views and conceptions the evangelical Quakers had to go back beyond the period of Quakerism altogether and return to forms which the original Quakers had found no need to accept to express their

own faith. To many a fervent Evangelical the religious life of the mystic appeared to be as barren as current Deistic thought.

One of the first weaknesses made clear by the new approach of the Evangelical was the old one concerning an adequate Christology. George Fox and his immediate successors had not felt any urgent need to define the relationship of the inner with the outward Christ. Their own response to the fact of subjective experience had been so easily and, for them, satisfactorily expressed in the terms of mysticism that they did not realize the need of those whose spiritual and mental predispositions were not in line with their own. It was out of this divergence of inner character that a great deal of the opposition of the Separations arose. Mysticism lends itself to an intellectual approach, Evangelicalism to an emotional experience. It is difficult to clothe the one in emotionalism and support the other by intellectualism, and to prosper the Evangelical movement among the Quakers was only possible at the cost of a diminution of its mystical element. One who cannot appreciate the reality of the subjective experience of the mystic is likely to either misunderstand it, or distrust it, and it was so with men like Joseph John Gurney. They thought that a reliance upon the "inward states" was a mere acceptance of moods and feelings

as authoritative and a disavowal of the necessity for faith in what was essentially objective. The mystic's opposition to the evangelical position arose out of his awareness that an objective scheme of salvation, to which the individual had only to give an assent, could never be harmonized with the doctrine of the "Inner Light." It also must be stated that Elias Hicks carried the doctrine to an extreme position where it was disassociated from man's knowledge and experience and entirely independent of the controlling and modifying effect of group guidance. We shall note later how Hicks was so dominated by the thought of the "Inner Light" and its predominance that he practically rejected the historical revelations as having any direct value for the individual. The opposition between the proponents of subjective and objective standards of religious experience is well set forth in the words of F. Bevan Braithwaite, who, as a young man at the time, took an active part in one of the separative troubles, the Beacon controversy, said referring to the orthodox:-

" With them everything is inward. Their hope was within - their righteousness was within - the blood by which they were cleansed was within - the water by which they were washed was within - their Christ was within and George Fox declares that their heaven was within."

One of the greatest significances of the acceptance of the doctrine of the "Inner Light" had been the fact that it was a doctrine capable of progressive interpretation and, as long as there was no attempt to make any static interpretation authoritative, lending itself, by its nature, to the exercise of a spirit of unity. That the doctrine did not lend itself to such authoritative interpretation was the experience of a committee of representatives of Orthodox Yearly Meetings in America which, in 1829, met to
(1)
frame a "Testimony." We read:-

" The ancient doctrine of the primacy of the Light of Christ in the soul gave the committee much difficulty. They still claimed that it was a 'fundamental doctrine,' but they felt compelled to indicate that those who were unsound had departed from the Light, and had followed the operations of their own mind, or more likely they had been beguiled by the 'inner darkness' which Satan substitutes for the Light ."

It had been the sincere and united testimony of the founder and early leaders that by establishing the centre of the religious life in the consciousness and inward state of man an entire independence of outward supports - "steeple-houses and priests" etc.- resulted. The absence of mystical inclinations and experience in so many of the Evangelicals naturally led to an emphasis upon right dogma and this in itself aroused the resentment of many of the

orthodox. The Quaker "priesthood of all believers" had created a wholesome religious democracy wherein each had liberty to express his individuality, within the limits of of the Quaker form, and to take part in the responsibility for the ongoing of the Society. In this period under review men not only became leaders of groups, but they also became domineering leaders. The Society's control fell into the hands of a few who, not content with ordering its life, wished also to direct its thought. Many of the early leaders had railed against the dominance of the clergy as being akin to the authority exercised by the papal system, and here were men who substituted the authority of personal influence for that which had always been a corporate expression. These leaders fostered division and created an interest in matters which otherwise might not have become subjects of turmoil. Changes would have come, but they would have been gradual approximations to ideas which in normal ways would have percolated into the Society - as gradual as the changes from the traditional dress, language, and manners to more normal customs have been. We have already said that it was a time of instability and change in many ways, and of this condition men with eloquence and influence took great advantage. One of these, Joseph John Gurney, was satirized

(I)
thus:-

" Joseph John, Joseph John
Thou sine qua non.
Of a certain religious Society;
Thy bolts thou hast hurl'd,
At a sceptical world,
And won what thou loved- notoriety."

The divisions in the Society fell roughly into three groups. There were those who, in America, followed Elias Hicks and became known as the Hicksites; in England the "Beacon" controversy was one of the outstanding evidences of the rise of a large and influential Evangelical group; and without these two contending groups, for the Hicksites were a constant irritant to many in England, was the body of conservative people who stood for the old traditional attitudes and viewpoints. Both the Hicksite and the Evangelical asserted their orthodoxy and claimed to be giving expression to the old in more contemporary religious terminology.

Elias Hicks was a farmer of Long Island. It is probable that his religious outlook was determined by the nature of his religious conversion. In it he could trace no human agency: for from the beginning it appeared to him to be an entirely subjective ripening of an inner consciousness of moral right and wrong. He was given to much quiet brooding and when he records his experiences in this matter

I. A. L. Pease: The Diaries of Edward Pease: p.387.

when on shooting expeditions we are reminded of George Fox sitting thinking when out tending sheep. Like Fox this tendency to introspectiveness and desire for some conviction upon which all could be based, and which would unify life, came ~~in~~ to a climax in a culminating experience. Hicks was at a dance and decided never to engage in such pleasures again. Naturally enough the consequent trial of his resolution was a difficult one, but the time came when he (I) could say:-

" I was deeply tried, but the Lord was graciously near, and as my cry was secretly to him for strength, he enabled me to covenant with him...."

Though he had a very limited education and had not the cultural equipment for giving adequate expression to his experience, he yet was a very clear and able thinker, capable of expressing himself with an eloquence, sincere and direct, that won and retained a large following. He was a student of the writings of the Quaker founders like Fox, Penn, Penington, Barclay, and in their writings discovered an explanation of his inner subjective states. He commenced his ministry about the time of the American Revolution, and, though in his dealings with others at meetings where a spirit of opposition arose showed his aggressiveness, his Journal

I. The Journal of the Life and Religious Labours of
Elias Hicks; written by himself: New York 1832: p.10.

reveals the picture of a man gentle at heart. Until near the end of his Journal he rarely mentions those who were "far from keeping to the original foundation." He writes without rancour, ill-feeling, or any sense of a real division. According to the Journal trouble with the Orthodox, the name taken by the Evangelicals, started in 1825 and after that it was one troubled meeting after another. Time and time again Hicks would arrive at some meeting house where he had planned to have a meeting only to discover it in the possession of his opponents; but nothing daunted he would carry on under the trees, in a barn, or accept the hospitality of a home or hall.

If there was one man who represented all the zeal, the intense conviction, and the anxiety of the Evangelical it was Joseph John Gurney. He was born in 1788, ten or twelve years after Hicks had commenced preaching. He came from a socially prominent family and had had a sound and extended educational preparation. One historian thinks that since Barclay there was "no serious attempt at the exposition of Quakerism until we come to Joseph John Gurney." Added to his undoubted scholastic ability he was possessed of great wealth, social prestige, ^{and} outstanding personal charm, and fired with great evangelical enthusiasm. His call was

one to repentance and a presentation of the doctrine of propitiation and atonement. He desired to show that the testimony of the Quaker was in no way isolated from the main stream of historical Christian theology and that it was in complete harmony with a scriptural evangelicalism. Scripture was the fountain head of inspiration and the "Inner Light" was only a source of guidance when it was based upon a clear understanding of Scripture. True religion could be obtained without any dependence upon inner spiritual guidance. For a long time Gurney represented the divisive spirit in the body and in 1837 when he applied to the Yearly Meeting of London for a "minute of liberation" to travel to the United States of America it was only after protracted discussion and difficulty that such a minute was finally framed. It was well understood what his presence in America might result in. His earlier advent in America brought matters to a head for the type of message he proclaimed was so evidently contrary to what had been the traditional doctrine of the Society. The voice of Gurney was not the voice of Fox, and the former must be held responsible for the widening and deepening of the breach which at that time appeared in the Society. John Wilbur (1774 -1856) was disowned because of the views which he had expressed in opposition to Gurney, whom he declared

to be unsound. Wilbur formed a group of his own and it was their testimony that Gurney and his followers placed too much reliance upon external matters to the detriment of the working of the "Inner Light." Edward Pease, who showed his practical support of the Evangelicals by subscribing \$200 for the circulation of 500 copies of Thos. Evans' "Exposition of the Faith, etc." condemned Wilbur by his statement that Wilbur's animating spirit was not of Light but of Satan. He wrote:-

" Friends in some parts of the vicinity of London are tried by the intrusion of John Wilbur and his ministry. It must be the disguised transformation of Satan which induces this man, to.....interrupt the Peace of our Society."

The Evangelicals believed in regular religious instruction, but to the Wilburites this savoured too much of "the will of the creature" and was not in accordance with the promptings of the "Inner Light." The seriousness of the separations in America can be gauged from the fact that out of 549 regular ministers 260 joined with the Hicksites.

In Great Britain the feeling was in favour of continuing fellowship with the Orthodox in America, and this was largely due to the influence of men like Gurney. It was the writings of Gurney which gave support and incentive to the "Beacon" faction in its attack on the Hicksites.

I. Alfred E. Pease: The Diaries of Edward Pease: p.307.

The publication, in 1834, of a small book entitled "A Beacon to the Society of Friends" by Isaac Crewdson was the culminating event in the Evangelical reaction to Hicks in Great Britain, but it revealed that while the body at large was Evangelical in spirit it was not prepared to go as far as to accept such a formulation as the recognized doctrine of the Society. The Evangelical movement had been fostered by the visits of Stephen Grellet, who had become an outspoken opponent of Hicks in America, in 1811, 1820, 1831, and 1833. Crewdson's whole statement is one of opposition to Hicks: it was not a constructive outline of Quaker thought, but a rebuttal of various statements made by Hicks. The writer does not appear to have been capable of a sustained orderly reasoning out of the implications of his statements. His method was to take a quotation of Hicks, attach his own brief observation on to the same and give scriptural warrant for his remarks by the addition of appropriate texts. Crewdson first of all set the Scriptures in the paramount position as the authority for the religious life; if Hicks had been guilty of relegating them to a very subordinate position his opponent carried the matter to the other extreme by giving it a transcendent place. Nothing was capable of ministering to the life of the spirit unless it could claim

scriptural support. In the next place Crewdson opposed the conduct of Quaker worship in silence. He gave it the name of Quietism and described it as a religion of "feelings" (1) and said:-

" ... to imagine that silence and stillness are essential to true worship would be a great error."

But his rejection of the basic faith of the Hicksite in the validity of the immediate guidance of the "Inner Light" became a disavowal of "the universal and saving efficacy of the Light of Christ inwardly revealed," and the assertion that the doctrine of the "Inner Light" was a "delusive notion" and the acceptance of such a doctrine as a "dangerous error." He believed that it was the following of this doctrine which had led to the reduction of Scripture to a secondary place and the influence of Deism affecting the Hicksites.

Whilst Gurney's writings and example had been of great support to this movement he did not give it his personal support. There were, however, others of influence who did. Luke Howard was a very prominent Friend, and he with Elisha Bates, of Ohio, gave their assistance. Hicks records in his Journal, "In the morning meeting Elisha (2) Bates and Anna Braithwaite made great opposition."

1. Beacon: p.96.

2. Journal of Elias Hicks: p.413.

Howard and Bates later left the Society.

Another who encouraged the Beacon movement was John Wilkinson of whom Pease records that at Wycombe , "John Wilkinson has been painfully scattering here." Wilkinson for some years was an elder of the London Yearly Meeting. In 1835 he gave public testimony to a disbelief in "Christ as an inward principle" and said that such a belief was a deception. Thomas Shillitoe hearing him preach on one
(I)
occasion replied by saying:-

" I hope that nothing I shall ever hear, nothing that I shall ever read, will shake me from the foundation on which our early friends built the Truth as revealed by the light of Christ within."

On the same occasion Shillitoe meeting Wilkinson said "Why, John Wilkinson, thou wouldst make us mere Bible Christians!" This was, indeed, what Crewdson and his supporters did wish to do. Wilkinson resigned from the Society in 1836. The followers of Crewdson withdrew from the Society and thus greatly depleted the numerical strength of the Manchester and Kendal meetings. Over 300 members were lost to the Society by the formation of what was called "The Evangelical Friends," but this group did not remain together very long. It contained in its varying attitudes to many questions the "seeds of its own destruction." Some finally joined the Baptists, others the Church of England, and yet others the

Plymouth Brethren. While the whole matter was a very regrettable incident it was, nevertheless, of a beneficial nature to the Society at large for it revealed the divisive nature of an emphasis upon one aspect of the Society's witness, and also retarded tendencies to separation. The result was that with the Beacon exception the Society held together in Great Britain.

The doctrine of total depravity was revived among Quakers by the Evangelicals who held that as a consequence of our first parents' fall from grace all mankind inherited their condition of sin. The punishment for that sin was that of an unmitigated state of eternal torment in Hell. But even as the sin of Adam was inherited by mankind so also the merit of Jesus, who was God incarnate and whose appearance was foreordained by God, could be imputed to the believer who would then be entitled to enter, after death, into an eternal state of felicity. The early Friends had not rejected the historic appearance of Jesus, neither had they denied the significance of the Crucifixion, but they did not hold that it was the purpose of God to make Jesus a substitute for mankind and remit the latter's punishment because the former had borne it. The future state of the soul would be apposite to its moral and spiritual condition in this life. The main purpose of the revelation in Christ

was not that of making available a substitutionary salvation, but that Christ himself should "bear witness to the truth" which had always been available to mankind. The London Yearly Meeting of 1820, in a printed epistle,
 (1)
 declared:-

" We profess to believe in the inward teachings of the Spirit of Christ Jesus, our Redeemer and Mediator, our advocate with the Father; of Him whose precious blood was shed, that He might procure unto us eternal life, and present us holy, and unblameable and unreprouvable unto God."

Crewdson maintained that the Evangelical doctrine of salvation was "the only ground of hope to man" and that it had been the faith, in differing degrees, of the Church through all ages. Man was powerless to effect anything of a meritorious character to offset the liability of sin. The
 (2)
 "Beacon" expresses this thus:-

" We believe that nothing man can do, or suffer will atone for, or cancel his sins. They are remitted by the mercy of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord...."

It was this belief in the total dependence of the individual upon such a scheme of propitiation that Joseph John Gurney felt was mitigated by the doctrine of the "Inner Light."
 (3)
 He felt that the followers of Hicks:-

" ...renounce the one great sacrifice for sin as the means of our reconciliation with God, and the ground of our hope of salvation."

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1. Rules of Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends: London 1834: p.50.
 2. A Beacon etc. p.11.
 3. Edward Grubb: The Historic and Inward Christ: p.100.

Hicks rejected any doctrine of inherited original sin as being contrary to the character of God, who in mercy would not visit mankind with the consequences of a sin that they were unable to avoid. He said:-^(I)

"...that we are under the curse of the transgression of our first parents, I abhor the idea..."

Having rejected the idea of original sin Hicks also denied that the Crucifixion had any relationship with his own sin: if there were any legal transaction between God and Jesus in behalf of sinners those sinners were the Jews who had rejected Jesus in the flesh. For Hicks accountable sin was a revolt of the will against the known will of God, and it was only by a willed relationship being established by the individual between himself and God that any state of salvation could be induced. Salvation was not a matter of an outward transaction, an arrangement between God and the individual whereby the former in consideration of what had been done by Jesus remitted legal penalties against the latter. Always salvation was an inner experience produced by "crucifying the will." Hicks was trying in his own direct way to solve the problem inherent in the view that the crucifixion of Jesus was foreordained by God and yet the agents of it were held accountable to God for the sin of doing it: it was his attempt to solve the problems of

predestination and free will as evinced in the gospel narrative and enshrined in Christian dogma. In approaching such problems he was not equipped with that sensitive philosophical attitude which does not reject all irreconcilables, but sees in them an evidence of a transcendent realm of reality sometimes irreducible to terms of human reasoning; he came to the problems with a rationalistic fervour that sees a problem with only one desire - to reduce it to finite terms and ideas.

Hugh Turford was convinced that the only way by which man could be raised "from the fall" and lead a righteous life was that he should "...walk in the Spirit; keep to (his) inward guide, the light of righteousness,"⁽¹⁾
 " ...for it is by and through the assistance of the eternal Spirit of Jesus in our own hearts..."⁽²⁾ George Harrison also wrote that:-⁽³⁾

" ..the 'blood shed for many, for the remission of sins,' is no other than the Divine Truth, freely poured forth through the Universe, for showing man his corruptions..."

Turford, however, did not make it clear how the "Inner Light" took a great deal of its saving efficacy from the contribution made to its character by the sacrifice of Jesus: he did not attempt to say whether that power was always resident in the Light, whether it had received an intrinsic

1. Hugh Turford: Grounds of a Holy Life: p.19. 2. ibid p.24.
 3. Geo.Harrison: A Few Thoughts, etc.: p.18.

addition at the Crucifixion, or whether it had power by imputation. He did not attribute to man power to save himself, but he gave primacy to the Light, "God's writing his law in our hearts," as the saving agency administering the benefits of a redemptive salvation.

John Gurney Bevan, who was of Evangelical trend, felt that any real spiritual experience must be inward and that as the "tempter's attacks are within so the transaction by which one partakes of the Redeemer's victory" was also within. He was not capable of resolving the problems of the subjective nature of religious experience and the determinative part the will can play in inducing and directing it. One of the contributions of Quaker thought had been the emphasis it had placed upon the possibility of the individual implementing his religious consciousness by his cognitive and volitional faculties. It was this which had given Quakerism an unique place, but Joseph J. Gurney never realized that it was not uniformity with other Evangelical groups which was Quakerism's traditional contribution, but an attempt to make available to those temperamentally suited the fruits of a subjective mystical experience. Gurney rejected this aspect of Quakerism altogether. He never went as far as Bevan.
(I)
He wrote:-

" were I required to define Quakerism, I would not describe it as the system so elaborately wrought out by a Barclay, or as the doctrines and maxims of a Penn, or as the deep and refined views of a Pennington; for all these authors have their defects, as well as their excellencies; I should call it the religion of the New Testament.."

And speaking in 1838 he said:-

"we are not to look to anything that we can experience within ourselves, for salvation, but we must look to Jesus."

His rejection of the scholastic authorities, and denial of the validity of personal experience, indicates how far, if he ever appreciated the position, he had travelled from the doctrine of the supremacy of the "Inner Light." It can only be said in passing, that if the original formulations of Fox had remained as a test of Quaker orthodoxy Gurney would have been judged as entirely heterodox.

Crewdson acknowledged that the locus of conversion was that of the spirit, and that the agent in the change was the Holy Spirit. The part the Holy Spirit played was that of a controlling, modifying element, so influencing the mind that it became receptive to outward testimony and preaching; it could not exercise a saving influence itself, but produced the inward condition in which the transforming power of the external plan of Salvation could be applied. Gurney contended that the knowledge of God directly applied gave salvation; Crewdson said that gospel truth applied

through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit became efficacious. Hicks, however, believed that salvation was neither by the influence of events totally unrelated to the individual, nor by the objective truth applied because of a receptive condition induced by the action of the Holy Spirit, but that it came as the direct result of the presence of something of the same spirit as was in Jesus being in man - this was the "light which lighteneth every man." It was this innate presence which was the direct and immediate agent of salvation. Hicks was obsessed with the idea that the significance of Jesus' Crucifixion and suffering was that attaching to them as nothing more than historical events. He never appears to have understood that there were implications for the spiritual life of man just as much in the objective facts of the Christian revelation as there were in the words spoken by Jesus; that the influence set up by Jesus within the life of man was as much conditioned by the one as by the other. To divorce them is only possible by a great attenuation of the significance of the former and weakening of the latter. Salvation, from the Christian standpoint, rests upon a knowledge of the historical facts of the Christian revelation and an inner experience of a changed life, and often separations have come because of an emphasis upon one aspect to the exclusion or detriment of the other.

Although from the standpoint of the Evangelicals the whole crux of the problem as between themselves and the Hicksites was that of the latter's attitude to the former's doctrine of salvation, we yet can see how for those who claimed to be keeping to the "old foundation" the question was one of the subjective nature of revelation - the possession by man of the "Inner Light." Some of the Evangelicals ignored the question of the "Inner Light" altogether, for what had been an integral part of Quakerism's message for 150 years could not be disclaimed by a series of pious expressions such as we have in the booklet entitled "A Beacon." One of the most comprehensive guides to Quaker life and thought in the 18th. century, a three volume work by Clarkson published in 1806, makes no mention of the "Inner Light." Clarkson was, however, an Evangelical and in his ignoring of this aspect of Quaker doctrine probably evinced his opposition to it more than his ability to handle it. Five years prior to the appearance of Clarkson's work, a pamphlet, which had a very wide circulation, entitled "The Faith of the People called Quakers," by Henry Tuke, was also published. The author in his treatment of the subject did not indicate in any way the very central position in Quaker thought held by the doctrine of the "Inner Light." This is the more remarkable because the pamphlet is devoted to extracts from the writings of Fox and the Scholastics. It is evident

that it was a deliberate attempt to support the contention that the Evangelical position had always been maintained in the Society. When the Friends of the Westbury and Jericho Monthly Meeting in America published a "Testimony" against Hicks they made no reference to the "Inner Light" and of its pivotal place in his belief. Their charges were based on what they asserted was his tendency to rationalism, his pride in intellect, his rejection of the doctrine of the Fall, and his denial of the orthodox view of Redemption and the Divinity of Jesus.

Crewdson, who had realized where the wide appeal of Hick's message lay, did not avoid the challenge by an ignoring of the question of the "Inner Light." He accepted the term "light" to cover the operations of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men, and said that it was possible for the Spirit to reveal itself through the mediation of such objective means as Holy Writ, but to accept its operation as being direct and immediate because of its constant presence was a "pernicious theory" and one "wholly subversive of Christianity."⁽¹⁾ He was convinced that the insistence of Hicksites on the "Inner Light" was an unsound fanaticism. He could not, however, renounce the doctrine - he could only interpret it along Evangelical lines. The "Inner Light" was the Holy Spirit which through the influence of

I. Crewdson: A Beacon etc: p.vii.

Holy Scripture opened the heart and enlightened the understanding, but that possession was not an universal condition of the human spirit, but was a dispensation given only to those who had been chosen by God. Every worker in the cause of true religion had received such a dispensation. Hicks maintained that "every rational creature" (1) received a gift of the Spirit and he went as far as to say:-

" When we speak to the natives (Indians) of our country, we have reason to suppose that they have a higher sense of this divine light of God in the soul, than the professors of Christianity generally have."

The writer of these words held that all men everywhere were under a dispensation of God which did not exclude them from any of the possible blessings of the Christian revelation. God, he held, would not require a man to act as though he were possessed of knowledge when that knowledge had been denied to him. Crewdson, however, confined his view of the great world outside the Christian community to what he (2) could discover in Scripture, and exhorted his readers thus:-

"let us not presume to speculate....either to fix their (the heathen's) inevitable doom, or to determine that they are safe without the knowledge of the Gospel."

The Evangelicals felt that something must be done for people and by people. Activity characterized their service to religion, and their theological conceptions were of that

type which could be easily translated into action. The viewpoint of Hicks was a call to meditation and subjective experience - an emphasis upon the value of a quietistic approach. The inner experience of the mystic provided strength for personal resolves, but the Evangelical wanted power to prosecute his task of convincing others. His religious outlook being objective it is natural to expect that he would look for his needed power in a direct dispensation from God in Heaven rather than from an "Inner Light" in himself. This opposition between the passive and active is (I) expressed by Crewdson in this way:-

" There is not, in fact, one exhortation in the New Testament to be passive, but rather believe, strive, seek, watch, pray, knock, work..... The divine command then is, believe - work. The quietist says - be passive."

Thos. Evans of Philadelphia, writing in 1827, claimed that the prominence which the early Friends had given to the "Inner Light" was not a consequence of their considering it to be of more importance than such doctrines as those of justification, Salvation, etc., but because there was a general disregard of the intimate work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man. Though he did not state it explicitly, yet it is implicitly suggested, that now that the Holy Spirit had resumed his proper place in men's considerations it did

not merit any preferential regard. Evans held that it was the "peculiar office" of Jesus to bestow on all mankind something of his grace and that grace was the Holy Spirit of the Trinity mediated through Jesus. Instead of believing that the reception of, and belief in the written Gospel was prior to a gift of the Spirit he believed that that Spirit's presence was to be acknowledged and followed as an essential preliminary to appropriating the merits of Christ's sacrifice. Evans was an acknowledged Evangelical and yet his expressions were in accordance with much of what the Hicksites believed, but by an emphasis upon one aspect of belief to the disadvantage of another he expressed a bias in favour of the former position. His books show a much more liberal spirit than that which usually characterized those penned at that time. He gave credit, if only meagre, to the views generally held by Friends and did not seek to eliminate them, but to harmonize them with the Evangelical viewpoint. Concerning the early Quaker doctrine of "Christ within" he said that to infer from it that they denied the historic Christ "would be illiberal and unjust." Those positions in the traditional belief which gave him difficulty were dealt with by being given a place of minor importance.

Gurney acknowledged that there was an influence

experienced in life which by its character had a definite connection with the Christian revelation and the person of Jesus, but he did not accept it as an emanation of Jesus. He believed that every righteous person exercised an influence for good - he likened it to the rays of the sun - but that that influence could be an actual derivative of the possession of spiritual power by its dispenser he denied. The primary reason for believing in the divinity of Jesus was not that of his unusual influence, but that out of which his influence grew - his unique relationship with God. Mankind could not experience a like relationship and so enjoy a similar divinity. The condition which sets up the rays of the sun cannot be partaken of by those who enjoy the rays. The influence which Jesus exerts must not be confused with what Jesus really is. Gurney believed that the "notion" of the "Inner Light" being something of Christ within came from substantializing that influence - the attempt to give constant reality to what was only a subjective and intermittent experience of an influence. To endue an emanating influence with divine life was tantamount to making that influence the conditioning circumstance of Christ's divinity instead of a subsidiary effect of it. Such an acceptance was a denial of the incarnation of

Christ as recorded in the Scriptures. Such influences, even though emanating from Jesus, Gurney felt were subservient to the more permanent authority of Scripture. Such an authoritative place could be given to the Scriptures because of the method of Evangelical interpretation which allowed for no progressive scholastic interpretation. These influences, though valuable as religious experiences, Gurney held to be "impressions made (1) upon our minds," and, according to the Y.M. Epistle of 1832, they were "an inward persuasion." John G. Bevan was convinced of the necessity for salvation according to the Evangelical position, but he did believe "...everyman coming into the world is endued with a measure of the (2) light, grace, or good Spirit of Christ," and that without that possession he would be incapable of meriting any blessing at the hands of God or securing his own salvation: but Bevan lacked that incisiveness of mind necessary for understanding all the theological implications of such statements.

Hicks brought every idea to the test of whether or not it was in accordance with the doctrine of the "Inner (3) Light." For him that Light was:-

"the ancient foundation, the light within,

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1. William Hodgson: The Society of Friends in the 19th. Cent; vol.1: p.301
 2. J.G. Bevan: A Refutation, etc: p.110.
 3. Journal of Elias Hicks: p.432.

by the power and efficacy of which, our primitive worthies were gathered to be a people...."

This Light was not some aspect of a greater and more important relationship between the soul and God; it was not a secondary product of some primary spiritual condition; it was the conditioning factor of all religious experience. Without it mankind could never have known God, and all his progress would not have developed a religious consciousness. That Hicks and his opponents were using different terms and adopting various methods to explain the same general possession of a disposition in life towards a spiritualizing of certain experiences never occurred to them. Hicks carried all his thought back to the "Inner Light"; it was the reconciling principle of his theological system and, as those who took Scripture literally interpreted, he never went beyond it. It was the "foundation rock" upon which alone man could raise any hopes of salvation. Every other religious authority, Church, Scripture, Creed, was (I) subservient to this "Inner Light," for, said Hicks,

"nothing short of a full submission to the operation of divine truth on their minds could fit and prepare them for the awful approaching season, when pale-faced messenger shall arraign us before the judgment seat of Him"

Hicks held to this doctrine with fanatical zeal and

dogmatic devotion, and as it was the first idea which appeared to explain his own religious experience and to be the centre of his thought, so also was it his final conviction. In the last thing he ever wrote, a letter to (I) Hugh Judge of Ohio, he said:-

" By which it is evident, that nothing but this inward light and law, as it is heeded and obeyed, ever did, or ever can make a true and real Christian and child of God...."

Henry Tuke, in his book entitled "The Principles, etc." gave support to the original Quaker positions by contending that the "Inner Light" was a secret principle which from the very beginning, and in all men, had been at work. Every phase of religion was the product of that operation - the nearer to the design of the principle's working the nearer the expression was to the mind of God. Every moral and spiritual aberration of the individual or the group was a deviation from the revealed standards of the "Inner Light." God's anger was justly aroused by such conduct because it was a willful rejection of his immediate witness in the heart. Tuke's position allowed of no approximation of the "Inner Light" to the Holy Spirit, for he stated quite definitely that it was by the former "Divine Principle" that the latter "...was more plentifully poured forth, and

(1)

became, as it were, the leading feature of that religion.."

He held the primacy of the Light to such an extent that he reiterated the old view that if human learning was possessed it was to be used, but that to be educated was not essential for the exercise of the gospel ministry.

George Harrison said in discussing the testimonies of Friends that the one concerning the "Inward Monitor, the Divine Light of Christ" was one of awe. He regarded it as being of the utmost moment that it should be retained (2) as the central doctrine of Quakerism. He wrote:-

" It is important that it should stand firm, as highly essential to the Society's return to a state of soundness and safety."

Hannah Barnard, whose "case", in both England and America, created such intense feeling and did much to bring attention to bear on the differences arising in the Society, felt that there was an essential difference between "doctrinal truths and historic facts" and that the former depending on an inner condition of acquiescence and conviction, in contrast to the latter's authority resting on the credibility of the historian, was the primary authority for the religious life, and in that life the most important function was that of the "Divine correction or illumination" by which doctrinal truth becomes "revealed

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1. Henry Tuke: The Principles of Religion, etc. p.45.
 2. Geo. Harrison: A Few Thoughts, etc. p.15.

truth." Upon that which is thus subjectively and individually secured rests the whole of religion.

The disparagement of learning by Hicks, and those who supported him, was consequent upon his acceptance of a dualistic theory of human life. It was this idea which had given Quakerism some of its most troublesome and peculiar testimonies. In Hicks the acceptance of this theory had a more experiential than authoritarian basis. He found his own experience verified in the views of the ancient founders. His religious experience had been inaugurated without the usual external aids and appeared to him to be more in the nature of inward processes than in outward forms. If his religion was to be something more than a self induced state of mystical exaltation it had to be related, on the inward side, to a source beyond self both in character and in time. The idea of a divine emanation granted unto men as an intrinsic reality given as a gift offered a solution to Hick's problem, but it left him with a dual personality - one side in close contact with the resident emanation and one portion seeking to express its human nature. The acceptance of this theory of the dual nature of life set up an antipathy between religious experience and natural phenomena, between the human and Divine, and so led the individual to snuff those ennobling desires which hitherto had exercised an influence

for good upon character because believed in themselves to be good. The ennobling of character which results from a regimentation of the interests and a control of their expression as a result of a recognition of the value of certain moral and religious principles, apart altogether from any idea of their existence in the character as innate tendencies, was lost, but the outstanding character of so many is traceable to the fact that they believed themselves to be men living under a "divine compulsion." Hicks claimed to be a rationalist, and all his powers of reasoning were applied to a systematizing of this doctrine, but, however clear to himself his explanations might have been, he was unable to overcome the natural antipathy of many to any doctrine which established religion on the basis of a human-divine interaction made possible by the existence within man of something completely divine.

The "Inner Light" according to Hicks was entirely subjective and received by a passivity on the part of the recipient. It is, he said, "a great truth, that what is to be known of God is manifested only in man."^(I) If there is anything of spiritual value, either directly apprehended or implicitly communicated, in objective forms it is not because man of himself registers it or that by its character it

I. Isaac Crewdson: A Beacon, etc. p.70.

impresses itself, but that the "Inner Light" creates the condition of receptibility and awareness. The cognitive faculties of man play an intermediary part in the transaction whereby the Light within recognizes the character of that which is without - the recognition taking place through man and man's part is in experiencing the mechanisms whereby this relationship is established. One might say that the recognition of spiritual values in objective forms was due to an outward extension of the "Inner Light" through the passive co-operation of man's faculties. Man must not exercise any volition if the primary cause is recognized to be a purely personal one unrelated to the purposes of the "Inner Light." Hicks wrote:-

" Therefore the most happy state that we can enjoy is a state without desire or thought; for then we are the Lord's, we are in his hands....."
(2)

And, again, he says:-

" And this was what I laboured after - to be empty - to know nothing - to call for nothing - and to desire to do nothing."

The diversive nature of the inner religious experience of a mystic like Hicks is to be seen in the many names by which the "Inner Light" was known. This varied nomenclature was not only an evidence of the oftentimes ineffable

1. Isaac Crewdson: A Beacon, etc: p.116
2. ibid p.52

character of the mystical experience and the problem of adequately expressing it, but also of the manifold influences which it exercised. For Hicks the Light was the "Spirit of Truth," "The Light Within," and "Inward Principle," the "Inward Teacher," etc, but its greatest character was in its being the "same light which guided Jesus." All that which the Light had meant to Jesus, the power by which he worked and was preserved, it could mean to the one seeking the same influence in his own life. What the Light had meant to Jesus in those situations analagous to man's own, it could mean for anyman seeking to be influenced by it. The Light which had given Jesus his power to live and work could be applied to the problems of the individual's life.

The solution to these problems was only found in turning to the "Inner Light" within one's own life. Hicks was so convinced of the supreme character and importance of the Light for man that he felt all problems within the Society arose out of the nature of the attitudes of individual members to it. This was the "rock" upon which the Society had been built, and any fundamental deviation from it would result in division. Hicks prophesied that any abandonment of the Quaker mission of proclaiming the doctrine of the "Inner Light" would leave the Society a "broken and divided people."

As he travelled and beheld the low spiritual state of Society he could only offer one explanation of the fact.

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He wrote in his diary:-

" ...and I was led, in a clear manner, to shew the ground from whence all this darkness and unbelief proceeded; that it was from a want of due attention to, and right belief in, the inward manifestation of divine light....."

Although Hicks was the leader of the movement for emphasizing the original position of the Society in regard to the "Inner Light" he was by no means alone. We have already mentioned Turford, Tuke, Wilbur, Barnard, and these by prolific writings and extensive travels greatly helped this movement. All were in agreement that, in contrast to any Evangelical doctrine of Election, a spiritual dispensation had been granted unto everyman. The Baltimore Yearly Meeting of 1839 expressed itself thus:-

(2)

" This is the eternal and inimitable Spirit of Truth which though designated by various appellations in Scriptureall pointing to one simple, indivisible, divine principle, impressed upon the mind of every rational creature, constituting the law of God there...."

(3)

Turford wrote that:-

" ...every man that cometh into the world hath, an inward light, that shewed them, as it sheweth us, what is right, and what is wrong; what is just, and what is unjust."

1. Journal of Elias Hicks: p.122.

2. A Defence of the Religious Society, etc: Baltimore Y.M.p.16

3. Hugh Turford: Grounds of a Holy Life: p.15.

Daniel Wheeler, supporting John Wilbur, said that the essential need was

" to have the attention turned to that holy principle of gospel light which shines in every heart." (1)

William Savery, who exercised such an influence in England and America, and who was responsible for changing the outlook of Elizabeth Fry (neè Gurney), said, in writing to
(2)
the Indians :-

" The Great and Good Spirithad placed his law in the hearts of all men, and if they carefully attended to its inward voice, it would keep them in love and friendship, and teach them to shun everything that would occasion them to trouble and hurt one another."

In making the "Inner Light" the only authoritative guide for life and its religious expression Hicks and his followers did much more than reassert the traditional faith. The Evangelical revival was, as the Reformation itself had been, founded upon a certain attitude to, and interpretation of, the Bible. The Bible had become for the Evangelicals the supreme source of religious power and doctrine, and the Quakers of the Evangelical school followed them closely in demanding that, as Crewdson wrote, it should be recognized as "of paramount authority." Those who claimed such a position for the "Inner Light",

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1. William Hodgson: The Society of Friends, etc: vol.i:p.344
 2. F.R.Taylor: Life of William Savery; p.69.

as an authority for conduct, created a difficulty for themselves. Believing, as they did, in the authority of the Light, subjectively experienced, and in Scripture, objectively known, they often had difficulty in reconciling the two. The Evangelicals acknowledged the value of inner experience, but only accepted it as valid when it could be harmonized with the literal interpretation of Scripture. If Crewdson had followed out one of his own declarations on this matter, he would have arrived at a more satisfactory explanation of this particular problem. He wrote of the Hicksites:-

" By vainly attempting to compare the Scriptures with the Spirit, and asserting that the Spirit is a higher rule, they deprecated the attested revelation of the Spirit, the only standard of religious truth."

The liberty of the individual to exercise a ministry, on the basis of a personal sense of the manifestation of the Light, had often led to uncontrolled loquacity in meeting. It was early found necessary to exercise some control over the ministry, and something of this was accomplished by having approved ministers recorded. The Hicksites claimed, in this respect, that their views were in accordance with the writings of Fox and the Scholastics, which they made authoritative. If Crewdson had been able he could have shown the need for such authoritative control, and made Scripture, on the ground of its being supreme as an historic revelation, the norm whereby the extravagancies of an otherwise entirely

free system could be controlled. He could have supported this view of the necessity for an authority in the control of the life of the Society by showing how it had resulted in the writings of the founders of the Society becoming almost Quaker scripture. His argument could have been based on how Scripture, as a generally acknowledged fruit of the Spirit's inspiration, was the best background against which to judge that which claimed to be the result of the possession of something of the creative spirit of Scripture. To give greater force to this contention he would have had to concede that to arrive at what is the essential spirit and truth of Scripture one must avoid the restrictive influence of a rigid literal interpretation. But Crewdson's attitude to Scripture was not based on any sense of its inherent spiritual worth, but on an acceptance of its being literally inspired; recorded miracles and fulfilled prophecies he accepted as evidence supporting this view. The rationalism of the late 18th. century had produced a spirit of theological uncertainty, and Crewdson no doubt felt a need for some infallible authority. The unchanging authority of a literally inspired and interpreted Bible, as proclaimed by the Evangelicals, met this need. Holding to the supreme authoritative value of Scripture thus regarded, it followed that the "Inner Light" was a subordinate standard for the

conduct of life. It was because this office of Scripture had been relegated to a secondary place, by the elevation of the "Inner Light" to the place of chief spiritual authority, that the "Beacon" protested. The Evangelicals felt that only through an objective medium, a medium open to corporate testing and bearing the marks of historical approbation, would God communicate his Spirit to the heart of man. Salvation and knowledge could not come "immediately by the Spirit," but was transmitted to man through the historic person of Jesus and the revelation of the Scripture, and the approach to these on the part of man was not passive but active. Any experience of the mystic, claimed as an inspiration, was more likely to be only "impressions made on their own minds."

In this attitude to Scripture Crewdson was supported by the writings and expressed views of Joseph John Gurney, who held that the soul received influences whereby it was converted, but that the inner experience which could be likened to "illumination" was dependent upon scriptural control. Revelation, which the Hicksites claimed to be entirely subjective, Gurney defined as the entrance of "divinely authorized knowledge" into the world through objective channels, and of the vast realm of intuitive knowledge open to the true mystic, nay, even of the mystical experience and its appearance in much of New Testament

writing, he was either ignorant or incapable of appreciation. Such mystical experience as the Hicksites had, made them feel that the Gospel was no static body of truth objectively expressed as a given moment in time, but a moving active eternal spiritual reality testified to in gospel record and finding its proper habitat in the soul. Gurney, however, looked upon the Gospel as that which is recorded in the New Testament and capable of application to life as an externally unchanging system of ideas.

Thos. Evans, of Philadelphia, whose book entitled "An Exposition of the Faith, etc" was well circulated in England, sought to prove, by a profuse quotation from Quaker writings of the early period, that the Founders and early Friends were truly Evangelical and that their position was firmly based on belief in (1) the Trinity, (2) the unique divinity of Jesus as distinct from any endowment we may partake of, (3) His propitiation for our sins, and (4) the Scriptures as an authoritative primary guide. He was thus giving expression to the position outlined, in another connection, in a declaration published by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting which in 1828 stated, in reference to Hicks, (1) that:-

" Under the plausible pretext of exalting the
"Light within" as the primary rule of faith and

practise, he endeavoured to lessen the authority of the Holy Scripture...."

Again and again Hicks testified to the delight with which he read the Bible, and we can be sure that he was a sincere student whose declaration that it had "tended to my real profit and religious improvement" was a genuine acknowledgement of the Bible's contribution to his spiritual life. He made it clear that the reader of scripture only received blessing when, by the operation of "Inner Light", he possessed spiritual apprehension akin to that which the writer of it had had. It was the possession of that inner understanding, the equipment with an innate knowledge and illumination, that operating in the writer thereof endued Scripture with any value that it possessed, and that inner condition was the ground of unity between those who claimed to base their religious conceptions on an interpretation of Scripture. Otherwise, so Hicks contended, Scripture diversely understood became the reason for divisions, for "warring and quarrelling." Underlying all Scriptural record, and as the primary cause of its production, there was the spiritual intuition of the writers whose revelations, in the form we have them recorded, were given for the specific conditions and needs of their times. The value of revelation is relative to the time of its appearance, and

its continuing value is in its possible appeal to the fundamental inner condition of men in all times; also latent in Scripture there is an evidence of the mystical intuitions of the authors. Hicks would have subscribed to Pastor Robinson's view that Scripture carried a progressive revelation which by study was gradually unfolded. The view that the external revelation was given for a specific need and time Hicks expressed thus:-

" Now the revelations respecting the nature of God, which were made to the Israelites, are true when viewed as in connection with and as having relation to their spiritual condition; but to any other state, they are not true; therefore such revelations abstractedly taken, are not true in themselves -are not the truth of God."

To whatever aspect of religious experience or doctrine we turn we discover the Hicksites contending for the supremacy of the "Inner Light." Everything pointed to that one thing, and having exercised such a ministry of guidance its real contribution finished. Writing to his friend, Hugh Judge, Hicks said:-

" When the Scriptures have directed and pointed us to the light within, or spirit of truth, there they must stop - it is their ultimatum - the topstone of what they can do."

The followers of Hicks were confronted with certain problems of Biblical criticism which in these days of

1. Isaac Crewdson: A Beacon etc. p.5

2. W.Hodgson: The Society of Friends in the 19th.Cent: p.197.
vol.1.

Higher Criticism would give them very little difficulty. The acceptance of the miracle narratives as being literally true was not the most significant thing about their attitude to Scripture, but, by the acceptance of the truth of the Old Testament stories, they imputed a certain character to God. The Evangelicals held it to be a test of faith in God to accept such stories. Hannah Barnard felt that such a character of God, as these stories implied, was unacceptable; she could not believe that God ever instructed his people to make war, and in making her position clear she brought matters in the Society to a head in 1794. She might have escaped disownment from the Society if she had accepted the miracle stories, but her denial of Mary's miraculous conception of Jesus laid her open to the charges which led to her disownment. But she did not give up reading the Bible on account of these difficulties, for she believed it to be a very useful aid to the religious life.

(I)

She said:-

" ...respecting the light in which I view some parts of the Scriptures, I here add my belief,that in them, as an outward written declaration, is contained every doctrine or precept necessary to be believed, and reduced to practise, yet, nothing is revealed truth to me, as doctrine, until it is sealed as such on the mind, through the illumination of that uncreated word of God, or divine light, and intelligence....."

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The Yearly Meeting of 1836, in London, declared:-

"our religious Society has declared its belief in the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and upheld the sacred volume as the only divinely authorized record of the doctrines of true religion...."

Hugh Turford went further than Hannah Barnard and asserted that God communicated to mankind only through subjective channels so that there was no need to "turn over the leaves of a book," but only by an introspection to discover the innate law of God.

In Ireland the tocsin against the encroaching ideas of Evangelicalism had been sounded by Abraham Shackleton of Ballitore. He denied that a God, whose character the Christian revelation made clear was that of love, would ever have ordered the massacre of the Canaanites. He received the support of many Friends.

There were some, like Tuke, who accepted certain of the Evangelical doctrines, for the cleavage between the Evangelical and the Hicksite was not always as clear cut as the heat of the controversy might suggest. Tuke believed in the doctrine of human depravity and of Salvation by the power of the historic Christ, but he did not accept the idea that Scripture was the only guide. He allocated to both Scripture and the "Inner Light" their respective

spheres of service and influence, and believed that an over emphasis upon either had led, and would lead, to many "needless and harmful disputes." On the "Inner Light" (1) he wrote:-

" The same principle of Divine Light, which led our predecessors out of the vain and sinful pleasures of the world, also let them see the corruptions which had taken place in religious worship and ministry; the inconsistency of war with the Gospel Dispensation; and the impropriety of divers other matters in the external deportment of professing Christians."

But the Evangelical attitude to Scripture had become too wide spread for the opinions of a Tuke to have very much influence. That attitude was changed by the slow processes of time and a widening interest in other phases of thought. However, there were never lacking those who raised a voice against this concentration of thought upon Scripture and its elevation as an authority. John Wilbur, who visited Great Britain in 1831 - 1832, recorded in his Journal that the Scriptures were not only taking attention away from the work of the Holy Spirit, but also from that of the Cross itself. Many of the leading Friends became actively interested in the expanding work of the Bible Societies, and they helped to create enthusiasm for the Bible among their own co-religionists. In such work Quaker isolation became difficult, and intercourse and co-operation with ministers and clergy became frequent and friendly.

On the question of which side was right in this matter concerning the place of Scripture in Quaker testimony one historian, William Hodgson, writing in 1871 expressed a sure principle of judgment. He said:-⁽¹⁾

"on the other hand, when once a religious Society has settled for itself its own standard as being in accordance with what it believes to be a correct understanding of Scripture; then, in order to try the consistency or inconsistency of its own members with its profession, the appeal must be, not merely to the Scriptures (which are variously interpreted), but to those interpretations of Scripture which have always been received and acknowledged as characterizing the faith of that particular people. Otherwise no society, or gathered visible church, can be said to have any settled religious faith and belief, as belonging to itself, and not liable to be constantly disturbed with impunity by innovations within its own borders."

Within the Society, however, the exercise of disciplinary restraint in this matter became very slack, and questions which had been settled by Fox, and confirmed by Quaker belief for generations, were matters in open dispute. By the use of the influence of position and autocratic action, men and women, whose views should have been subjected to enquiry, were disowned who claimed they were being true to the doctrine of the supremacy of the "Inner Light."

The emphasis upon the "Inner Light", while primarily

I. W. Hodgson: The Society of Friends in the 19th. Cent: vol. i: p. 245.

an expression of the orthodox quaker faith, was also an evidence of the subjective approach to religion which had arisen largely as the result of the influence of 18th. century Deism. The Deist held that his total religious experience was amenable to the analysis of reason, and that anything outside the sphere of intellectual enquiry, such as implicit faith, was only a species of superstition. The rationalist directed his criticism against much that was historical and objective when it was used in support of certain religious opinions. The quaker thought that in basing his religious doctrines on an "Inner Light", subjectively and mystically experienced, he put his faith beyond the criticism of rationalism. Once grant the premise that God has given something of his own nature to man, and on account of the subjective nature of so much of their religious experience to some this postulation becomes easy, it becomes possible to build up a theological system which can successfully meet criticism directed at the religious authority of historical records and objective forms,

Hicks sought to make everything subordinate to mind by believing that the extent of rationality was co-incident with the extent of the universe. He believed that the human mind was an element of the universal mind, and that what was beyond its understanding was not subject matter for faith.

The Hicksites were seeking a conception applicable to the whole range of universal existence, which was monistic, and believed that in doing this they were intelligently using the thought forms of early Quakerism. They felt that there could only be one ultimate reality, and that a dualistic theory of life raised too many problems and left one with the idea of an opposition between the material and spiritual factors of life. This ultimate reality was, of course, God. It was this theory of spiritual monism which led them into difficulties in the matter of the doctrine of the Trinity, and resulted in the accusation of their being Unitarians. While not explicitly expressed, it was, nevertheless, implied in their writings that the three persons of the Trinity, as believed by orthodox Christians, had no substantial existence. The esse of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God was identical. They did not deny the incarnation of Jesus or the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, but they did deny that that which was incarnated in the one, was the reality of the other, had any substantial existence apart from God. It was God manifested as Jesus: it was God manifested as the Holy Spirit: and not either related to God, but being God. Holding to such a view Hicks felt that the most important thing about the Christian revelation was not the historical person of Jesus, but the presence in him of God, and this he called the "Inner Light." He wrote:-

(1)
" The Christ then which it concerns us to have an interest in, is not that outward manifestation

which was limited in its operations to a small province - a single nation, and to this day known only by history to a few."

As we have already noted, many were without the intellectual ability to fully realize the implications of such statements. They claimed to be following in the footsteps of Fox, but Fox had avoided giving any conspicuous notice of the difficulties inherent in his theological positions by the extensive use of allegorical language. Such language, open to various interpretations, made it possible for him, in all sincerity, to accept a doctrine which involved belief in both a "Christ within" and a Christ of an historical revelation. But of

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that original Quaker faith Hannah Barnard declared:-

" In reply to Vindex I have adduced much additional and I trust conclusive evidence, that the original faith of the Society of Friends was Unitarian."

The difficulty they had in believing in the orthodox Trinitarian position was well shown by Harrison who, in speaking of the falsity of the evangelical trinitarian belief, said it was

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based upon:-

"the awful notion of one of those persons (of the Trinity) having his wrath appeased by the murder of another of them, even his own Son...."

They were able to continue in this contention because the leaders of the Evangelical party so often failed to say anything of significance. Gurney, when faced with the task

(3)

of refuting this Unitarian tendency could only lamely reply:-

" I have never thought it right, either in preaching or in writing, to make use of this term, (Trinity) which is scholastic in its origin, and is liable to misconstruction; but I consider the doctrine itself, though far beyond

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1. A Narrative....in the Case of Hannah Barnard: London, 1804: p.vi
 2. Geo. Harrison: A Few Thoughts etc.: p.8
 3. Samuel M. Janney: The Separation: p.119.

the reach of natural understanding of man, to be plainly set forth in Scripture; and so far am I from regarding it as merely theoretical in nature, that I accept it as of the highest practical importance in the experience of every believer."

In this matter Tuke's attitude was similar to Gurney's, but whereas Gurney was loathe to deal with it Tuke felt it was a subject best left alone. Tuke, who was of Evangelical leanings, said that the questions arising out of an examination of the doctrine of the Trinity were very perplexing, and beyond man's capacity to answer finally.

Hicks rejected a great deal of the dualism of Quaker thought, and on this ground did not accept the Virgin Birth. He believed that the idea of the Virgin Birth had been promoted to influence the Jews to believe that Jesus was their promised Messiah. The physical flesh and blood of Jesus was in no wise unique, and had no part in that by which he was constituted the Son of God, and, therefore, in its creation no special arrangements were necessary. God, as the creator of all, would be interested in the processes by which Jesus came into being, but the carnal, in this case, had no essential or unique relationship with the Divine. What was begotten of God was of the essence of God, and because of that it possessed divine attributes. But the Hicksites believed that all men were possessed of this innate divinity, and according to their degree of its recognition they became "sons of God." What then made Jesus unique? It was the greater realization on

his part that he was endowed with "that of God" which is granted to all and is known as the "Inner Light." To many this interpretation of the unique character of Jesus was, to say the least, obnoxious, and was the reason of their opposition. An opponent of Hicks once asked one of his friends, as though the question concluded the matter, if he had ever heard Hicks say "Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"? Thomas Foster sought to meet the charge of the Ratcliffe Monthly Meeting that he had denied the divinity of Jesus, by saying that he differentiated between the power in Jesus (I) and the person of Jesus. He said:-

" It was not this but the eternal divinity and omnipotence of Jesus Christ, which my accusers and judges disowned me for not holding, as their records will prove. And that, too, refusing to say whether they meant to apply those terms to the man Christ Jesus, or to that divine power which dwelt in him."

Although there was never any definitely organized rapprochement between the Evangelicals and Hicksites, including the many whose sympathies, if not active support, placed them on one side or the other, it must not be understood that the whole Society was divided by schism. Always there was a large body of members who were either indifferent to the causes of division, or who felt that the opposing groups were not really alienated in conviction. This large

group maintained its testimony to the tranquillity which had characterized so much of Quaker history, and helped to bring the Society through such a trying time. We have evidence which bears out the contention that there were those who tried by an expression of their own faith to reconcile the differences. We noted how Thos. Evans tried to do this by a changed emphasis upon certain aspects of Evangelical doctrine. Samuel Rundell, who held to the original views and yet was sympathetic to the Evangelicals, spoke against any persecution of an individual on the grounds of conformity or otherwise to certain doctrines. He said:-^(I)

" Now here we behold an evident illustration, both of the love, and also the justice of Almighty God, who does not condemn any of 'the children of men' for their unbelief of a theological truth, of which no certain knowledge or conviction is impressed on their minds: for the spiritual manifestation of Christ, in which all mankind should believe, does enlighten all: and those only are condemned, who do not love, but on the contrary through unbelief hate the light, and reject its admonitions."

Rundell felt that God did not judge men for any rejection of theological formula, but for that which was the ground of it - the "Inner Light." He accepted the Evangelical positions regarding conversion and salvation, yet he held that the "Inner Light" made more possible the progressive realization of those beliefs. Such a harmonizing of the

"Inner Light" with the work and merit of the historic revelation had also been expressed as early as 1823 by the Meeting for Sufferings in Philadelphia. At the time it was a tragedy that two such parties as the Evangelicals and the Hicksites (containing many whose views had not been influenced by Hicks) could not have been brought into a frame of mind that would have made possible their working together to present to the world the views upon which they were in agreement. Both parties, however, did not reject the original testimonies of Quakerism, and in maintaining their place in the Society they laid the foundation for a later revival in the essentials of a distinctive Quaker witness.

CHAPTER SIX

The changed emphases following the decline of Evangelicalism, and the varied conceptions and interpretations of the modern period.

Even though one admits that certain beneficial effects followed the Evangelical movements among Quakerism in the first half of the nineteenth century, one cannot help but see that the concomitants of such a movement, such as the emphasis upon doctrine, the enthusiastic activity, the hastiness of judgment, were alien to the true spirit of the body. If Quakerism had become predominantly Evangelical in outlook and activity it would soon have ceased to exercise an unique ministry, hold a particular place, and would have become allied in character to many of the small fundamentalist groups which are without any definite Church consciousness. It would have been a great matter for regret if this had been the ultimate end and the peculiar testimonies of the body had ceased.

It may be said with a certain amount of accuracy that the high-water mark of Evangelicalism as a definitely formulated doctrine and mode of conduct among Quakers was reached in the period from 1850 to 1860. The leading spirit of the movement, Joseph John Gurney, had died in 1847. If, however, Evangelicalism failed to capture the total mind of Quakerism and mould its whole doctrine it did exercise certain beneficial forces and gave something of its spirit to the body.

We have observed how at the beginning of the century Quakerism had become more or less moribund: it had become a society of people placing reliance upon traditional views and modes without the ability to critically examine and sustain them. The very doctrine which should have been a unifying element was so interpreted that it became a divisive irritant. Upon matters of moral significance the body could still arouse itself and speak as a unit, but when challenged by some problem of religious belief they had recourse to their authorities and nothing more. These men and women were afraid of being passionate concerning truth, for they were a little uncertain where the truth really lay. This, of course, can only be applied to certain sections, but, nevertheless, influential ones. Of the emotional outburst of the Revivals of the time they (I) were suspicious. Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) tells us:-

" I have longed for virtue. I hope to be truly virtuous, not to be enthusiastic and foolish, but only to be so far religious as will lead to virtue."

It had been into such a state of mind that the Evangelicalism of men like Gurney had come as a revolutionary force demanding action and making of the matter of religious conversion a "holy war." Their weapons were a denial of

the supremacy of the "Inner Light" over faith and the assertion of the human depravity doctrine and the need for Salvation. The barrenness which had resulted from the intellectual aridity of the Quietistic period gave way to the fertility of ideas, if not of intellect, typical of the revival spirit. The Quakers had strenuously denied the Calvinistic doctrine of Election, but by their aloofness and withdrawal from so many of the ordinary social activities they had established a sense of superiority among themselves. When William Savery was able to write "For there are those.... among the various professors whom I can embrace as children (I) of the one great and universal parent...." he was not simply giving voice to a sentimental expression, but was really protesting against something of the insularity of his brethren in the Society. That insularity had been broken somewhat by an entry of Friends into social and political work, but its greatest breach was made by the Evangelicals who saw that such a Society cannot live unto itself - it must propagate its individual gospel or pass into oblivion. The Evangelical conviction carries a sense of obligation to all mankind that cannot be contained within any sectarian boundaries, even though those boundaries, as in the case of early 19th. century Quakerism, be strengthened by social traits

of a distinctive character. The isolated individualistic standpoint could only with difficulty be maintained in face of such developments within the Society, and especially when such movements inaugurated organized missionary work and supported the labours of bible societies. The intercourse with the great world outside brought great changes to Quakerism. Priscilla McLaren (the sister of John Bright),
(I)
writing in 1865, said:-

" As a very great event to me, I went out to tea last evening to Joseph Fry's, (at Bristol) and met a beautiful company of women, both physically and intellectually, and the gentlemen were very nice also. Except the hostess, whose Friend's dress was exquisite, there was nothing that could have led one to suppose that it was a Friends' party, save the absence of a piano, and the capacity for serious and intellectual conversation on the part of the ladies."

How such a sentence epitomizes the changes that had come over the Society since the beginning of the century!

But while something of the enthusiastic spirit engendered by the Evangelical revival remained to energise the Society, there was gradually a return to a more cautious attitude to the questions of theology. For many years after the disruptive effect of Evangelicalism had passed the doctrines of that movement remained the predominant views in the Society, but more considerate counsels prevailed and

there was a decline in the tendency to formulate definite expressions of Quaker belief. The first definite evidence we have of this change is in the attitude adopted by the body at large to the "Richmond Declaration of Faith." In 1887 a conference was arranged and took place at Richmond in Indiana, U.S.A. It was attended by 99 delegates from the Yearly Meetings of London, Dublin, New England, New York, Baltimore, Canada, North Carolina, Indiana, Kansas, and Western Iowa. The conference was inaugurated by Friends of Evangelical views, but with a desire to arrive at some agreed statement of faith which would make possible the bringing together of the sundered parts of the whole Society. It failed to accomplish anything useful to the Society at large, but clearly revealed the changed attitude of many of its responsible leaders to any attempt to make a statement of faith authoritative.

The "Statement of Faith" drawn up by the Richmond conference was, as was to be expected, Evangelical and based upon a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. In the 31 pages taken up by the printed edition there are no less than 155 scriptural references. The peculiar Quaker testimonies concerning war, marriage, oaths, were still maintained, but there was no direct mention made of the

"Inner Light." The ancient Quaker doctrine of the universal and inherent bestowal of the "Inner Light" was rejected
(1)
thus:-

" We own no principle of spiritual light, life, or holiness, inherent by nature in the mind or heart of man. We believe in no principle of spiritual light, life, or holiness, but the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, bestowed on mankind, in various measures and degrees through Jesus Christ our Lord."

" We disavow all professed illumination or spirituality that is divorced from faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth, crucified for us within the gates of Jerusalem."

The statement made clear that a certain amount of silent waiting, which was of expectation, did have its value in worship. Its whole position, however, was grounded in the historical appearance of Jesus and in the merits of his Crucifixion, and, also, in the denial of any inherent spiritual nature in man. The Yearly Meeting of Dublin, in publishing this statement, stated that there had been a "great variety of judgments" expressed concerning it, and that it could not see its way to adopt it. It did, however, with the Yearly Meetings of New York and Baltimore, give it its approval. The London Yearly Meeting decisively rejected it, and in this they were agreed with the Yearly Meetings of New England and Ohio. This conference proved to be a turning

I. A Declaration....adopted by the Conference...in Richmond:
1887: p.II.

point and after it the ebb from the dogmatic attitude of Evangelicalism was evident, but still the term "Inner Light" was treated with suspicion. There was a swing back to an emphasis upon the subjective nature of religious experience by an increasing number of Friends, but still a hesitancy about accepting some type of immanent spirituality as its basis. This condition of mind is exemplified in the utterances of the Manchester Conference of 1895.

The calling of the Manchester Conference was the result of the decision of the Home Mission Committee. The members of this committee felt that a great ignorance of the fundamental principles of Quakerism existed amongst the general public and in the minds of the younger members of the Society, and that something should be done to counteract the influence of such ignorance. The committee therefore recommended to the Yearly Meeting of 1895 the "appointment of a special Conference for further discussion." The result was the holding of a conference in Manchester later on in the same year. The gatherings of the conference were of an enthusiastic nature, and often had attendances well over one thousand in number. If the rejection of the "Statement of Faith" of Richmond had indicated the gradual decline of Evangelicalism, the Manchester Conference was the sign of a

new attitude to the liberalizing thought of the times. The subjects to which some of the speakers addressed themselves, and also the list of speakers, reveal that there was a more liberal attitude to science, but, in spite of what has been said by certain Quaker historians, it must be frankly confessed that these speeches did not reveal any close acquaintance with contemporary theological thought. The conference appears to have been more concerned with justifying the absence of a set Quaker ministry, of its rejection of formal prayers and the Sacraments, than in making an opportunity for informing the world of its unique contribution of a religious faith based on inner experience and expressed in the distinctive doctrine of the "Inner Light." Even at the great public meeting which brought the conference to a close, nothing of this nature was expressed, and to any outsider who might have been present it would have appeared as an enthusiastic gathering of orthodox evangelistic people. But it was not what was said that mattered most, but what was never mentioned. It was not the great crowds which gave the conference its significance, but the fact that it represented a Quakerism becoming unified and consolidated once more - at least in England. It was the true beginning

of what might be termed the modern Quaker period.

From the speeches of the conference, however, we can discover that the minds of the leaders of Quaker thought were beginning to be taken up with the questions concerning the subjective religious experience. It is clear that while many of the speakers made reference to the work of the Holy Spirit they were divided into those who felt that the work of that Spirit had its inception within and those who felt it had its inception without the individual and was received inwardly by an act of the will. J. Rendel Harris wanted no separation within between the mental and spiritual faculties; he felt that both were a part of the Divine Life in man and that a recognition of the common basis of their existence prevented a false emphasis being placed upon either. S.P. Thompson recognized the presence within man of an authoritative influence whose work could be likened to that of illumination; he declared that modern thought would remove many of the misunderstandings and ignorance by which the recognition of this force was retarded. But his was a mystical approach when he declared that that inner experience was beyond the investigation or explanation of Science. "It is," he declared "a spiritual fact, only
(I)
to be apprehended by the spiritual sense." The burden of

these speeches was the essential need of experiencing "the work of God in the soul." It was acknowledged that many other branches of the Church Universal held such a view, but the distinctive feature of Quakerism was the emphasis it placed upon it for the religious life. F. Sessions said (1) that it was "an experience essential to salvation."

We see here how the tendency was away from faith as an acceptance of a definitely formulated doctrine, to an experience subjective and partly ineffable. The Evangelicals had held that the Holy Spirit visited the hearts of the faithful, that this presence was one of the beneficent results of accepted salvation, but we mark in the expressions of this conference the old-time belief in the Universal bestowal of a spiritual presence. There is an avoidance of the term "Inner Light," but the inheritance of thought consequent upon the long held views concerning it is to be seen in the emphasis upon the office of the Holy Spirit. George Cadbury believed that the Holy Spirit was "given to everyman that comes into the world," while Annie Warner Marsh likened worship to a "wonderful emotion of the soul" which has been observed in even "the heart of the savage" seeking after God. W.E. Turner rejected any notion of a limited number of people possessing the capacity to respond to an

1. Report of the Proceedings of the Conference etc. p.36.

inner spiritual urge which was as "the voice without a sound," for he believed that a "spiritual faculty is bestowed on all men." R.H.Thomas simplified the matter by his uncritical statement of belief "that every soul is visited by God." Frances Thompson and Edward Grubb made use of the old phraseology; one claiming that the "immediate inspiration of every soul" was consequent upon what was the basis of Quakerism's "cardinal belief" of "the guiding inward light," and the other that the conception of the Universal Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man entails the truth of "the light that lighteth everyman."

While we have mentioned so many excerpts from the speeches of this conference, and there are many more that could have been equally well cited, it would be untrue to say that any large part of the conference's attention was directed to this aspect of the religious experience; in fact only a very minor place in its attention was occupied by it, but its mention by so many speakers shows how it was beginning to assume a normal place in their considerations. These same speeches also show that the exclusiveness of thought which, through so many periods of expansive thought, learning, and enquiry, had characterized the attitude of the Quaker was giving way to a receptiveness of the fruits

of theological and scientific enquiry. We shall see as we proceed into the twentieth century how this open-minded spirit led to the acceptance of many ideas which, to say the least, would have appeared to Fox and his contemporaries as fantastic. Yet the welcome given to new thought showed the return of a truly democratic spirit to Quakerism. When the Manchester Conference met there were many whose minds had been re-orientated by the thoughts which the separations had produced and who were unwilling to settle any question on the basis of an appeal solely to authority, either of Quaker history or biblical interpretation. The great world of outside thought, other than that of the Evangelical revivals, had hardly impinged on the thinking of Quakerism during the Quietistic period of calm or the Evangelical time of storm within the Society, but now the stream of such thought began to flow into Quaker thinking and was, indeed, a refreshing one. While there is very little internal evidence to establish it one cannot help but feel that that stream partook of the nature of that which had found its source in the work of Kant (1724-1804). Kant inaugurated a movement of thought which continued and made, perhaps, its greatest contribution long after he had passed on. His idealistic philosophy was not only an adequate reply

to the challenge of 18th.century rationalism, but in his insistence upon the value of moral sensibility for the establishment of religious certainty he was propounding the view that obedience to objective forms and historic authority is not the sole ground of religious certainty.

The application of the philosophy of Kant to the problems of theology was made by Schleiermacher (1768 -1834). He has been called "the founder of modern theology." Whether that is so or not it remains true that he definitely influenced the theological thought of the 19th.century. One of his chief ideas was that the religious experience is more important, for the religious life, than the thought forms in which it is expressed, and that religion can exist independently of the proofs of reason. A man is saved by a religious experience, and Schleiermacher believed Jesus could have a distinctive part in creating it. A religious experience leads to salvation when it issues in a consciousness of values and a self-determined power to achieve them. The soul is the deep underlying consciousness of final things, and by the presence of the power liberated in the life by Jesus it becomes the dominant inner condition. It is easy to see why Schleiermacher's formulations became known as "the theology of feeling." There can be little doubt that the work of these two men, with that of Ritschl (1822 - 1888) which

created a great interest on the Continent, and also influenced the trend of religious thinking in England, made great contributions to the thought of Quakerism when it had thrown off the shackles of its Evangelical conservatism - that contribution may have been more indirect than direct. Something of the effect of that thought was evincing itself in the writings of Erskine, Campbell, and Frederick Denison Maurice.

We need to remember, too, that the furor of the Oxford Movement focussed attention on the questions of authority, and the claim of Newman that without the guidance and authority of an infallible Church there could be no real religion, must have brought many Quakers sharply up against the dangers of seeking to make Quaker faith rest on an authoritative and dogmatic basis. The secession of Newman in 1845 was only the end of one chapter in the story, for since that time consideration has consistently been given by leading religious thinkers of the Church of England to the question of the authoritative basis of the Church. So without Quakerism there was much thought being given to the questions concerning the objective and subjective nature of religious authority; thought which left behind a mass of material available to the Quaker thinker when he was prepared

to seek spiritual sustenance and mental quickening in pastures new.

It was in this mental and spiritual environment that Quakerism moved on towards the beginning of the 20th. century. The final period of Quaker thought has been one in which no generally recognized authoritative standard has produced any apparent conformity of thought. This state of independence has resulted in Quaker belief expressing itself in multiform ways. But, as a legacy from the period of separations and probably as an influence from the Moody revivals, the spirit of Evangelicalism - the evangelistic spirit - has remained to quicken the life of the Society. Two epoch making books appeared at the commencement of the century which gave substantial support to this new spirit of enquiry by making so evident the many-sided nature of the questions of authority and experience. Sabatier's posthumous volume, translated into English in 1904, "The Religions of Authority and the Religions of the Spirit", opened up in a new way the questions concerning the forms in which religious authority had shown itself in the historic churches, their orders and dogmas: he went on to deal with the accepted theory of the infallibility of the Bible, and then, finally, showed the need for the

subjective elements of religious experience. In the same year that Sabatier died, 1901, William James commenced his Gifford Lectures in the University of Edinburgh. These lectures were published the following year under the title "The Varieties of Religious Experience." The book gave an impetus to the psychological study of religious phenomena, and placed emphasis upon the pragmatic value of religious experience. If, however, Sabatier had established the need for the subjective elements of religious belief, James accepted the validity, on subjective grounds, of the many and varying types of religious experience. The approaches typified by Sabatier and James were evidences that something of the scientific spirit was conditioning the character of religious enquiry.

It would be a fairly simple matter to define Quaker practise and belief as regards certain social and political questions, but it is only with difficulty that one can give definite shape to the modern theological outlook of the Friends.

One of the first evidences of the enlightenment of the modern period is to be seen in the generally accepted view that educational poverty is a barrier to that liberality of thought and spirit which had been so marked a feature of the first period. It was now recognized that if the Society was to make any impact upon the religious

life something was needed to counteract the intellectual poverty of so many. At the Manchester Conference it had been recognized that many young Friends were being lost to the Society because of the inability of the ministers to hold them intellectually. John Wilhelm Rowntree had noted this need and had become the leader of a group seeking to meet the need and rectify the situation. The absence of a settled ministry had been no great burden on the intellectual life of the Society when it had men such as the early scholastics devoted to its service, but in a more prosperous age, when so many of the leaders were primarily successful business men, it had led to a type of ministry more zealous than informed. It was now felt that a meagrely informed mind was liable to accept partial truth as full truth, and to make decisions which could not be intellectually sustained. For long the Quaker minister had eschewed any formal preparation for the message he proposed to deliver at some meeting for worship. The contention that this was the only right method was now widely questioned, and many believed that anyone proposing to engage in the work of the ministry on some stated occasion should make wise preparation for the same. The intellect had been regarded as carnal and opposed to the

"Inner Light" which was spiritual, but, as we have noted, as early as the Manchester Conference, Wendel Harris had spoken expressing his conviction that mind and spirit were elements of one fundamental reality. The consecration of mind was now to be seen in a deepening and widening of its power by the accomplishment of an increased knowledge. Since that time the study of psychology has increased our understanding, and the Quaker's too, of the inner working of man's consciousness, and we have been led to see that there is a unity of life and purpose between what we have called the spiritual and the mental. Rufus M. Jones (1) expressed this new attitude thus:-

" The Quaker principle, properly understood, called for fearless education since there is no safety in individualism, in personal responsibility or in democracy, whether in civil or religious matters, unless every individual is given a chance to correct his narrow individualism in the light of the experience of larger groups of men. If a person is to be called upon to follow 'his light' he must be helped to correct his subjective seemings by the gathered objective wisdom of the race... "

When the Quaker, in considering the problems of his faith, admitted the value of "the gathered...wisdom of the race" a broadening change in his outlook very naturally followed. The fact that Darwin had expressed such a revolutionary view as that of Evolution could not help but change the trend

of a great deal of religious thinking. Even the more religiously acceptable theories of emergent evolution worked out by Bergson and Lloyd Morgan at the beginning of the present century would tend to change the expression of certain orthodox principles of Quakerism. John Wilhelm Rowntree speaking concerning this wholly changed world of scientific thought said that recent Quaker history was of "an inward revolution."

Some of the Quaker thinkers of this period have gone so far as to claim that not only is reason identical with the self-consciousness of the individual, but also that the authority which the perception of moral and esthetic values exerts has its seat in the Reason. Consciousness of religious truth, for them, is not based upon an awareness of subjective experience, but on the recognition, through the work of reason, of the truth expressed in the facts and circumstances of the outer life. On this view of the place of reason in the inner life there is no room for the entry of any entirely subjective and impersonal truth into the consciousness, and any experience which has the form of being subjective is only an inner reaction to what has taken place, and has been perceived, on the objective plane. If followed to its conclusion this view would result in making

religion an entirely intellectual matter, and would lead to a rejection of those innate other-world feelings as without foundation. Against that position some have made direct attack and asserted that our moral and religious sensibilities are derived neither from the exercise of reason, nor the enlightenment of education, but are native (I) to the inner life. Edward Grubb said:-

"that intellectual study will never reach the goal if it ignores or sets aside the deeper intuition of God and Divine Truth which we call the Inward Light."

That interpretation, however, did not issue in the position that this intuition of "God and Divine Truth" tended to express itself in the verbal propositions which result from a directed intellectual enquiry into some problem or other. It is rather an increase of feeling, an added intensity of spirit, attaching to certain religious conceptions which invests them with an authority beyond that with which verification endues them. While certain thoughts have a connection with this inner state of exaltation, to the subject of it it appears to have a separate and distinct existence. It is an ineffable mood apparently produced by some condition beyond the reach of the intellect, but a mood which lends itself to a limited verbal expression. One sometimes

I. Edward Grubb: Quaker Thought and History: p.55.

has the feeling in reading the many ways in which this view was expressed that the writers were loathe to posit the existence of moods the cause of which were to them incomprehensible, and by this method of dealing with them they gave them existence in a more or less organised inner life. We shall see further on how others dealt with this matter. Those who held to this view recognized that it entailed the "existence of something beyond reason," and one writer felt that it was through the channel of such a subliminal aspect of the self that communication with God (I) was established. We read:-

" ...I said that the innermost region was that which corresponded to our relation to the Eternal. Certain it is that as we sink into the innermost depth of our own mind we become aware of the things which are unseen and eternal."

Such a sense of communication with God became dependent upon the ability of the individual to meditate and produce a mystical mood in which the cognitive elements of consciousness took on an added significance for the subject. In such a state we can readily understand how thoughts which, in ordinary states of attention, we could induce by the normal processes of thinking, would appear to be of unusual import. By many of the writers on Quakerism it was

I. Caroline E. Stephen: Light Arising: p.128.

hardly ever realized that that condition of inner sensitiveness, which makes possible the intuition of some types of knowledge, is not possessed by all mankind. Many find it comparatively easy to be subjective in their religious thought, while others seem to be so mentally constructed or habituated that their thinking is always objective; these latter ones need the guidance for thought supplied by external religious authority. While it may be possible to educate the religious extroverts to the point where they begin to appreciate the subjective elements of religious experience, organised Quaker life has done very little in this respect. It may be that the adoption of a paid ministry, settled programme, and some attempt at religious education, among certain groups in America has done something to remedy this lack, but generally the Quaker has failed to appreciate that the import of his belief can only be experientially realized by those who have either had mature religious experience or some preparation for it. One writer⁽¹⁾ has stated that the felt need for a "rule or faith" was a consequence of no longer possessing "the first insight into truth," that the search for "an infallible outward guide" was the inevitable result of the light within "burning dim." It could have been more truly

1. Edward Grubb: Authority in Religion: p.34.

expressed if he had said that when men hold a belief which by its nature lends itself to interpretation in terms of faith and outward practise primarily much of the mystical and subjective religious experience is naturally lacking. The typical mystical experience comes when the belief in the "Inner Light" becomes something more than a tenet of faith and expresses a recognized innate tendency. There is an objective form of truth which lends itself to expression **in the** formulations of creed and dogma: there is a subjective form of truth realizable only in mystical experience. We can agree with those who have stated that often the tenets of a religious group can become divorced from the central experiences and thus decline into formalisms, but it is surely true that even the doctrine of the "Inner Light" has no intrinsic quality by which it is saved from such a fate. It can be agreed, however, that such a doctrine does not so readily change in its effect upon its holders as those doctrines allied more definitely to objective authority. No doubt the Quaker apologist, on this matter, would say that the superior power of the "Inner Light" was derived from its being a direct emanation of truth from truth, and we can appreciate why some holding such high notions went far to substitute " the idea of infallibility from the bible to

(I)
themselves."

In dealing with the subjective elements of religious experience, the writers of so many of these modern Quaker books have not fully stressed that the very nature of that experience would give to it the character of immediacy. But, as William James has pointed out, the mystical sense of immediate union, with some world of consciousness other than the normal one, does not necessarily depend upon the cognitive content of the experience being religious, or the method of induction being meditative. The Quaker having a sense of immediacy has attributed it to the fact that its origin was divine and that nothing came between him and the source of his experience. Truly there is a sense of final reality in such an experience, and the subject feels he is gazing into another world of truth - it is the great illumination. The more one seeks to induce such experience the greater his faculty to do so becomes: facility in producing mystical experience come from perseverance in seeking it. It is an experience common to the religions of all classes and types, and it is given its specific character from the content of the belief which accompanies its inception. For the Quaker this experience became an authoritative one.

(2)

One writer has analysed it thus:-

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1. Caroline E. Stephen: Quaker Strongholds: p.23.
 2. Edward Grubb: Authority in Religion: p.39.

" We conclude, then, that Faith is a native endowment of the human person as essentially the child of God. It is the sonship within us arising to meet the Father of our spirits. Like all native endowments, which are gifts of God, it grows with exercise and this requires the venture by which we project our grasp of Truth beyond that which is fully proved. Its seat lies deeper in the self than the superficial distinctions we make between Emotion, Thought, and Will; and in its exercise all these functions are involved. Reason and Conscience are its friends and supporters, if they are also at times its necessary critics. It may be kindled into activity by outward Authority, but it is never bound and fettered by any bonds that Authority can lay upon it. It is the free response of the human soul to the inward Authority which assures us that truth and goodness and beauty speak to us with the very voice of God."

This native endowment of an inward authority, this response of the soul to the appeal of moral goodness, was another way of expressing a returning faith in much of what the original doctrine of the "Inner Light" had stood for. Others giving a somewhat similar explanation of their belief stated that the character of it was derived from the "Inner Light" being a "pure ray of direct Light from the very Throne of God; one ray which belongs to each one individually." We need to bear in mind, and further we shall note the scientific attitude to it, that in dealing with the ineffable states of innate feeling language becomes symbolic. Much of the symbolic language of Quakerism had by long usage become fairly stable in the meanings imputed to it, but always the difficulty of

interpreting it remains. However, in emphasizing the need for this inner state of authoritative feeling the writers were expressing the conviction that without a personal subjective experience one's religious life was not fully developed.

Before going on to an analysis of the varying views developed in the freedom of the modern period, we should note the place and interpretation given in the official, though not authoritative, expression of Quaker Faith and Practise. For this we take the three volume "Friends' Book of Discipline" published as follows; part I, 1922: part 2, 1925; part 3, 1931, and each part adopted by the London Yearly Meeting in the respective years of publication. Part I is a compendium of the expressions of belief of the outstanding Ministers from the earliest time, and shows how the "Inner Light" has returned to a central place in Quaker doctrine. Not only does the necessity of personal and innate religious experience run as a thread through the considerations of varying chapters, but "The Light of Christ in the Heart" is the subject of one whole chapter. There is comparatively little of modern testimony contained in this part. Part 2 deals with "Christian Practise," and asserts at the very beginning on page xiv, "The central fact

of Quaker experience has been called the Inward Light." As is to be expected in a declaration of belief adopted in 1925, after the peculiar strain exerted on Quakerism by the War and the influence of its widespread international service, it is greatly concerned to relate its distinctive testimony and unique service to its central beliefs. It does not give any of those explanations which we find in such great abundance in their contemporary writings; the "why" of the belief is not their concern so much as showing the "Inner Light" to be the "why" of their conduct. The "Inner Light" is the foundation of their service to all mankind; they have a world-wide outlook because all mankind
(1)
is:-

"bound together....by a fundamental unity of conviction, based on some experience of the Light of Christ in their own souls..."
(2)

The position of the book is that:-

" Friends' experience of the Inner Light has given them an assurance that God exists, and that He is directly accessible to every soul that seeks for light and guidance."

But the fullest expression of this faith in the existence and nature of the "Inner Light" which "can never perish" is
(3)
printed thus:-

" We believe in common with other Christians that

1. Book of Discipline: part ii: p.97
2. ibid p.103. 3. ibid p.137.

" in Jesus Christ, the Divine Word, which in all ages had been the "Light" of men took human form. We have seen in him that revelation of the priceless worth of mankind in the sight of God, and know that in virtue of his "Light" shed abroad in every human soul, all men, of whatever race or nation, are brothers."

The official declaration is thus seen to be non-committal regarding any of the speculative ideas of modern thought, and has been satisfied with reiterating the essential need for subjective spiritual experience.

The central experience of immediacy, the feeling that everything standing between the deeper self, and its object of attention has been removed, the sense of unhindered communication between the finite and the Infinite, whereby a new significance attaches itself to the feeling states of consciousness, is the greatest achievement possible to the mystic. From the many and varied explanations of the character of the spiritual affinity existing between God and man, which are to be found in so many modern Quaker books, we are led to believe that this experience has become a fairly common one. The freedom of expression in the modern period has issued in a wealth of description regarding this, but the predominant idea is that of the unity of the inner life with God. Edward Grubb made the union of man with God the operation of an "Inner Light" which was not a human faculty, but was the presence of

(I)

"the Spirit of God Himself thinking His own thoughts in us." It was the underlying nature of our self-consciousness, an infinitesimal part of the Divine consciousness, that impelled us to be aware of truth. The limitations upon the operation and influence of that mind would be those imposed by the acceptance of lesser values belonging to the objective and material world. It is implied in this view of the relationship subsisting between God and man that the intercourse between the two never goes beyond the limits of the conscious self. There is no need for any extension of the self, a projection of the inner self towards a God distant in place in aspiration is uncalled for, and J.W. Graham said that prayer could be auto-suggestion "if the 'auto' includes God."

In making the operation of the mind of man in mystical experience akin to the working of God's mind the Quaker thus unified the world of God with his own world of experience; he made the extent of consciousness the limit of the Universe and by his own consciousness gave himself a part and place therein. He thus gave substance to his feelings of the "other world." He sought for an evidence of this view in the character of his experience and held because in it he found certain elements which did not fall

into the categories of ordinary experience that, therefore, they were of the "other world." So through the gateway of his own consciousness man could enter into a realm of reality which was directly under the control of God, and in which God was constantly present: it was not simply a sphere of direct divine influence, but the place where God dwelt, and wherein one became conscious of God's actual presence. E.V.Brown expressed the matter plainly when he said, in reference to the story of Jesus taking a little babe and saying that whosoever received such a child "receiveth me," "if this meant anything at all, it meant that Jesus saw in every little child a potential saviour." (1) The "Inner Light" was to be found then in the realm of the highest and best that we know, but the revelation of it was not sudden in time or static in character, but because our overcoming of the difficulties created by the Light being incarnated in us was a gradual process, so the inshining of that Light was a progressive unfolding and its character one of increasing power. This gradualness of the Light's incoming G.N.Hibbert (2) explained by saying:-

" God is more or less incarnate in every man. God is the permanent potentiality of becoming incarnate; man may become increasingly capable of receiving this incarnation."

1. E.Vipont Brown: Quaker Aspects of Truth: p.42

2. Gerald N.Hibbert: The Inner Light and Modern Thought: p.55.

When we realize that God is actually present in our lives, and that that presence endows us with great spiritual possibilities, we are then really converted. Until we have come to such a realization our life is only mentally and spiritually superficial. Such a realization is not attained, according to Eddington, by an introspective examination of the self so much as it is by inducing a mystical mood which helps us to realize the nature of truth as "a part of ourselves." What then, may we ask, is the contribution on the manward side to this? In that it is the experience-manifold which gives distinctive character to so much of personality, so also does the immanent divinity take on a personal character from the personality through which it expresses itself. The Quaker cannot go so far that he will make his own inner consciousness the ground of two diametrically opposed forces. Between that which he recognizes as being distinctively human and that which he feels to be of God he cannot have a continuing chasm or he would be the victim of a divided spiritual personality; and the sense of harmony created by his mystical experience cannot be obtained by a total oblivion of the self or it would be without that contact with the ordinary facts of life which makes its contribution so pragmatical. So confessing "that of God" within himself he

acknowledges it to be unknowable until he has himself, by an act of the personal will, placed his intellect at the disposal of it. The individual character of the personality, seen in its knowledge, interests, beliefs, emotions, will have some effect upon the character of that union which he now willingly establishes, but where the contact is made, either in some region of almost ineffable experience, or some experience in which the intellect plays a part, there will be the sphere of operation of what may be termed "a unique Divine-Human personality." That (I) personality is the "Inner Light." R.M.Jones writes:-

" The Inner Light, the true Seed, is no foreign substance added to an undivine human life. It is neither human, nor Divine. It is the actual inner self formed by the union of a Divine and a human element in a single undivided life."

That unity between the microscopic divine life in man and the macroscopic entity of which it is a part expresses itself in those values which we appreciate as final, but we do so because they are the evidences of the all pervading divine spirit. J.W.Graham explains it by the use of a psychological term; he holds that the "permeating spirit of God" is akin to an extension of his personality. In this way man is indeed individual, but, by the induing of his inner self with meaning and purpose by God, he partakes of

the character and life of God. Edward Grubb, holding the Berkeleian view that there is nothing existing apart from the infinite Spirit and a realm of subordinate finite
(I)
spirits, wrote thus:-

" The fact that we recognize only one truth, and all the rest as error, points to One Consciousness as that for which the whole world exists. God is seen to be the deepest foundation of all truth, the reality of which phenomena are but appearances, the basis of the distinction we make between truth and falsehood. The world is real, but it has its reality in God, and in God alone. Human consciousness, or human personality, is thus regarded as a point at which the Universal Consciousness, or Divine Personality, is seeking to manifest itself. In Biblical language, man is made in the image of God. Reason, therefore, which in the widest sense is identical with Thought or Self-consciousness, is in a real sense not only human but Divine. In Johannine language, the Divine Logos or Reason was from the beginning with God and was God, and was also the Light of man."

One might almost say that in such ways as those indicated the writers sought to solve a religious "ego-centric predicament." The mystical experience, per se, probably is without any moral authority, but because of the subject's mind content it is given a religious significance. So far the individual would himself be responsible for the creation of those inner states of religious authority, but it would be an intolerable suggestion that their background

was entirely subjective and human. If he cannot claim any divine influence in the manner by which he gives significance to objective things and impressions allied to them he must seek for some divine connection on the subjective side. He becomes allied to final reality because he is part of a larger consciousness, the consciousness of God, and it is the operation of that consciousness within his own which gives such definitely religious character to his experience; it would exercise a selective influence by placing an emphasis upon those elements of the mystical experience of the Christian which were truly aspects of the final experience of God. The unity, thus expressed, between the lesser and the greater consciousness was described by some by the use of the terms "soul" and "over-soul," and making their relationship one of degree rather than one of being. "The distinction," says Graham, ⁽¹⁾ "between them is like distinguishing a leaf from a tree," and in another place he gives fresh form to this idea by the use of an analogy of the cell life of the body, the component cells leading an individual existence, to the total organism of the body. He writes:- ⁽²⁾

" May it be that we are like cells forming a greater whole, entering somehow into the total personality of God. We the elements in his likeness which go to build up His being?"

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1. J.W.Graham: The Divinity in Man: p.42
 2. J.W.Graham: The Faith of a Quaker: p.6.

But we must not think that Graham's view is the pantheistic one that God is the totality of all the divine emanations immanent in man. He believed that we all possess "something of God", but the acceptance of such an idea of universal bestowal did not mean that God's being was dependent on the union of all those "inner states." It is the idea that all life has its source in God, and therefore reflects something of his character, but exists independently of him. Graham was trying to deal with the questions concerning the immanence and transcendence of God; he found it was necessary to maintain the thought of the personality of God to hold to his transcendence, but, to establish the divine basis of innate spiritual experience, to believe in his immanence.

That mankind has from the beginning made progress by the operation of an inner sense of right and wrong, the acknowledgement and acceptance of the dictates of a moral "ought" which we call conscience, friends have, with others, believed. Some difference in belief concerning the "Inner Light" can be seen in the degrees of approximation between the conscience and the Light. Some have accepted conscience as being the vehicle of the Light; others the conscience as the Light; and yet others the conscience as one evidence of a higher faculty - the Light. Rufus M. Jones holds that
(1)
"There is an underived ethical core in us," which cannot be

held to have been produced by the biological and evolutionary processes of time, neither can we say that it is a function remaining because of its "utilitarian" values. Its source is beyond man's intellect to discover, but it is at the very foundation of life. That the character of this "elemental basis" is of another realm of reality than that in which we live out most of our normal life is to be seen in the way we use ideas and thoughts which do not arise out of the nature of normal objective experience, but bespeak a "beyond" in the consciousness. It is from that background we derive the categorical forms of thought by which so much ordinary experience becomes finally intelligible to us. In placing the moral awareness of man beyond the sphere of evolutionary influence, in making the conscience "that of God" which has been in human nature from its very primitive beginnings, in allowing its fuller operation to be only due to an increasing awareness of its presence, the Friends have maintained a duality in life which for some has been a very difficult problem. The sense of choice with which man finds himself confronted may be due to the fact that he has developed his interests upon a two-sided front, he has not always found it easy to reconcile his awareness of another realm of idealistic values with the legitimate appeal of mundane affairs,

and if sometimes in choosing the former in preference to the latter he feels he has chosen the higher, it is because so often he has failed to make an adjustment, a reconciliation, between the two. If he finds in a doctrine of "Inner Light" a principle by which he can organize and unify the whole of his interests it cannot be simply because of the divine origin of the Light, but because he has indued it with authoritative qualities that, lacking the mystical appearance, he would have recognized as the influences of reason and appreciation. When the individual gives preference to one set of feelings, one group of emotions, when he imbues one type of thought with a value superior to that which he grants to another, and his only rationalist basis is of an inductive type, it is because he presumes they are derivatives of some objective reality radically different from the ordinary elements of his consciousness: thus he comes to make the inference that his "Inner Light" is divine, and that he is possessed of a higher and lower consciousness. Gerald K.Hibbert, after discussing the character of conscience and "Inner Light", asserts:-

" We may argue and argue, but it seems always to come back to this - that we know it because of the Divine Spirit within us."

I. Gerald K.Hibbert: The Inner Light and Modern Thought:p.44.

And so, the possession of an innate divine emanation is, for some, the great spiritual postulation, verifiable by pragmatical testing, but beyond the intelligent affirmation or refutation of reason. Thomas Hodgkin held that the other-world value of the "Inner Light", that, which while evident in conscience was beyond it, was shown in the way by which the individual was helped to choose between two alternatives which, on the basis of his understanding, inclination, and scale of values, offered of themselves no guidance. The feeling state which became directive in such a connection (I) was "the perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit." That had been present with mankind from the beginning, and any developement in man's awareness was due to the fact that the primary condition of "Light" evinced itself to its object through elements in his make-up capable of change, amenable to education, and reacting to changing emphases in the social environment. It was thus possible to talk of the "social conscience", "the group conscience", and by such terms indicate one secondary sphere of influence in which the prime conscience was being given greater influence, opportunity, and freedom to operate. From this standpoint sin became a deliberate turning away from the known possibilities of the inner life - a spiritual aberration

produced by the perversion of the will. "It is defiance of the Inward Authority;" in the full sense of the term it is always 'against the light'.⁽¹⁾ The tendency to sin, the revolt against the moral sense, often arises from the nature of the physical self, and is not in itself a sin; it is when that tendency is actualized by the will that it becomes sin.

We have already mentioned the outstanding work of William James, and the impetus which it gave to the study of the psychology of religious experience. Some of the Quaker thinkers were not unready to apply the results of such study, and the practical investigations which it entailed, to their own specific problem of the "Inner Light." But there was also a wealth of other matter that could be applied in this investigation. In 1882 the "Society for Psychical Research" had been founded and had carried on, prior to the beginning of the present century, a great deal of experimental and statistical enquiry, without bias, into the nature of otherwise inexplicable psychic phenomena. The spread of the cult of Spiritualism, and the opposition it engendered among the more orthodox or Christians, resulted in a more widespread interest in its allied problems. If the psychologists have established the nature and value of

1. Edward Grubb: Authority in Religion: p.21, footnote.

already accepted mental phenomena, the students of psychical phenomena have proved the reality of previously doubted experiences. An appreciation of the problems entailed, and a knowledge of the work accomplished, in investigation may be gleaned from the many published "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research." One conception which both psychological and psychical students accepted, and which proved to be of great value to them, was that of the "subconscious" or the "subliminal." The existence of such a subconscious self, as that outlined by modern psychology, was proved by the facts which emerged in the work of the psychotherapists, and in the investigation of psychical phenomena the acceptance of such a conception solved many problems. The conception embraces the view that below the level of the fully conscious there is a realm of mental activity. Within this realm impressions and ideas are stored and exert an unconscious influence upon the conscious life. This subliminal life is not open to the direction and direct control of the conscious life, although it can be influenced by the processes and content of the normal mind, nor to the operation of introspection. From this lower stratum of the mind emerge sentiments and movements not submitted to reason or reflection. The psychoanalyst has found it to be

the seat of much abnormality, and the psychical student has held that in telepathy, clairvoyance, and other like phenomena we see its operation. The large place it has come to have in the work of the psychology of religion, and the application of that science to the problems of life, can be readily seen in the semi-popular works of men like John G. Mackenzie, E. S. Waterhouse, and Leslie D. Weatherhead.⁽¹⁾

To John W. Graham this idea became a prolific one; by it he could now understand the source of so many of the experiences of George Fox, as indeed it offered a new explanation of so much of Quaker mystical experience. This subconscious self was "...the gateway at the back of our souls which opens into the light of the eternal."⁽²⁾ For Graham, however, it was not simply a lower depth of consciousness, it was a distinctive one. Through it the spirit which had been in Jesus manifested itself in the human life; through it there was possible the identity of the divine with the human. He saw in the possibility of telepathic communication between sympathetic minds an analogy of what was possible, on this lower level, between God and man. The "subliminal personality" of Jesus is without the limitations imposed by space and time and can manifest itself in the conscious life because it is a spirit present in all

1. In this connection see, for example, the latest book of Leslie D. Weatherhead: *Psychology and Life*: pub. 1935.
 2. John W. Graham: *The Faith of a Quaker*: p. 75.

(1)

subliminal life. We have Graham writing:-

" We have in Jesus Christ a personality falling into the same general framework as our own, as the bodies of all animals fall into the same general scheme as our bodies; but whilst the divine subliminal endowment which we possess is a glimmering and struggling light, we find behind the human personality of Jesus a subliminal soul to whom the Spirit is given without measure."

From this standpoint of Graham the unusually full bestowal of the historic spirit, the Logos, in the subliminal of Jesus constituted the uniqueness of his character on the divine side, and, by implication, we can hold that he believed that the uniqueness of Jesus on the human side was in his deserving, by obedience to that supraliminal consciousness of his mission and message, of that super-endowment. We must acknowledge that the idea that Jesus revealed the innate spiritual possibilities of the subliminal, and in his own character showed the application of those possibilities fulfilled in the conscious life, is a very inspiring one, and offers a way out of many christological problems. That it has not been an isolated Friend's approach is testified to by the words of Graham, "There are, however, many friends who are psychical researchers."

(2)

Others held, however, that it was not so much a hidden depth of consciousness, as an other-consciousness.

1. J.W.Graham: The Faith of a Quaker: p.76

2. *ibid* p.79.

(1)

Edward Grubb wrote:-

"the principle of the Inward Light means that in every self-conscious person there is at work the Over-soul - a Consciousness greater than his own."

Eddington, who approached the matter with scientific caution, believed that below the level of ordinary consciousness there were other levels shading off by lessening degrees of acuteness into indeterminateness. These levels were, however, united in the total consciousness. At the lowest level, he implied, there is a fundamental consciousness to which he gives the name "world-stuff." It is this "world-stuff" which is the basis of our inner experience of God, and it is present in all conscious life. In the higher levels of consciousness it is hard to distinguish it because of the environment with which our individual interests have surrounded it.

While modern psychology, with the support of its lesser contemporary, psychical research, has discovered a realm of mental life which offers, in the hands of some, a reason for the continued belief in the "Inner Light" it also, by that very discovery, offers an alternative interpretation whereby the developed doctrine may appear to be a rationalization of certain experiences. We can easily see how the subconscious becomes the repository of the repressed emotions and aspirations of the sensitive and

introspective person, and, accepting the psychological explanation, we are told that nothing taking place in the subliminal is without influence in the conscious life; that nothing taking refuge in the subconscious is lost. Those elements of emotional and aspirational character which have volitional urges continue to seek some channel of expression, and in attempting to pass the "censor" set up between the conscious and subconscious realms become transformed into something more in harmony with the norms of the supraliminal self. If the retreat of unsatisfied desires and unfulfilled wishes into the subconscious, often brought about by conflict with the complex social milieu, has resulted in some type of mental and emotional disintegration harmony can be restored by the acceptance of some such unifying idea as that of the "Inner Light." In the latter case the emerging repressions will be clothed in thought forms acceptable to the dominant authority of the new idea. It is here that the rationalization takes place - unconscious it is true. Seeking to explain the idealistic nature of his belief the subject instead of attributing it to the central thought, which has been accepted because of its pragmatic value, carries it back to the subconscious nature of much of his inner experience and holds it to be

the result of some power objective to the self, but expressing itself through the medium of the subconscious.

However, the recognition of an universal subliminal divine emanation not only strengthened the humanitarian and international outlook of Friends, but it also brought back a regard for the quiet meeting. It established once again a reason for faith in "the priesthood of all believers," and a respect for the personality of the individual worshipper. Caroline E. Stephen went as far as to say, (1) "The natural fruit of mysticism is Quietism." But the generality of Quakers do not agree with the view of J.Travis Mills that the continuance of the doctrine of the "Inner Light" without modification gives wisdom to the advice, "that they should possess their souls in quietness and refrain (2) from meddling with public affairs." The "Inner Light" has constrained the Quaker to be more zealous in the prosecution of works of mercy and amelioration so that thereby he may the more easily "speak to that of God in everyman." It should be said, however, that any Quietism which may have returned, or perchance remained, to Quakerism is not of the type of passive spiritual slothfulness of the 18th.century, but an active searching for a sense of personal need and

1. Caroline E.Stephen: Quaker Strongholds: p.30.

2. J.Travis Mills: John Bright and the Quakers:vol.ii:p.207.

intimate guidance in the affairs of life both individual and social. The London Yearly Meeting of 1922, in its General Epistle, expressed itself in simple language thus:-

" We believe that God, as Christ reveals him, enters so completely into the daily life of all of us, that all can become one family in him. We find him indeed in our own hearts, but we find him there far more as we unite in quietness with one another, seeking to forget ourselves and to discover his will. This realized oneness with God and man is the greatest of all forces; it is the kingdom of God in germ, the beginning of a world of untold beauty and joy, where sin, oppression and squalor shall be no more. God has no human body now upon the earth, but ours, yet he calls the bodies of men his own."

Again and again we have noticed how many Quaker thinkers, beginning with Fox himself, attempting to explain the presence of the Light in all men, postulated that it was inherent in life itself; to them it was an aspect of the life process. However, they never worked out a complete explanation of the way by which this divine life was not only universally present in all men, but how it was a continuing condition in the life of the individual and of the race. J.W.Graham offered the view that it was due to a biological fact. He said that the basis of individual life, with its inherited tendencies and characteristics, was to be found in a transmitted "microscopic germ cell," but that cell was also the transmitting agent of the "Divine Indweller."

That resident divinity increases with the accepted doctrine that the germ cell which is productive of life is not the creation of the organism in which it is found, but only uses such a medium through which to express itself. Tracing the origin of this cell back to the beginnings of life itself he holds it to be the ground of the assertion that, (1)
 "We are thus all made in God's image." He expressed himself (2)
 thus:-

" Moreover in this we find the cause of our oneness with all other men.....For it appears that this germ-plasm is accurately the same as has come down through all other families."

It is probable, though nowhere explicitly stated, that much of the thought of an abiding and continuing spiritual life, transmissible from one generation to another, was a reflection of the contemporary views of emergent evolution. Evolution had offered its contribution to the problem of the observed progress of life from lower to higher levels: it had suggested that intelligence itself was a product of that evolutionary process. It had offered no satisfactory solution to the problem of why the direction of evolution had been upward and its character progressive - such changes as were noted came because of the pressure of necessity and the need for environmental adjustments. But in the

1. J.W.Graham: The Faith of a Quaker: p.26
 2. ibid

evolutionary process emergents appeared which, apparently, had little if any connection with their progenitors. Who or what was responsible for the character of the new emergents? What was the nusus producing this directional activity? Lloyd Morgan expressed himself very clearly on this point. He wrote:-⁽¹⁾

" For better or worse, I acknowledge God as the Nusus through whose activity emergents emerge, and the whole course of emergent evolution is directed."

Bergson, who gave the name "creative evolution" to this process, did not accept a nusus working in life, but life itself was the nusus. Life itself, the "elan vital," was the original world-principle, the pervading, creative, impulsive, fundamental reality. It entered matter and overcoming matter's natural inertia and resistance decided the process of evolution and its direction.

Gerald K.Hibbert did not accept the views of Graham, but he followed the evolutionists very closely. The principle by which man came to his full stature was also operative in nature. The divine nature is the endowment of all nature, all creation, but with its recognition by men spiritual life is born. Hibbert wrote:-⁽²⁾

" Surely, we may hold that this growing principle in the universe which passes from the almost blind

1. C.Lloyd Morgan: Emergent Evolution: p.36.
2. Gerald K.Hibbert: The Inner Light and Modern Thought:p.15.

unconsciousness and automatism of the vegetable and animal world into the developed self consciousness of the human being is the Inner Light, the Divine Spirit, inextricably interwoven with the life of the world, even in its lowest manifestations. The instinct that makes a flower turn towards the sun is a rudimentary form of the fully developed Will in man."

This approximation of the spiritual life in man with some vital force inherent in the nature of life itself gave, or should do, a value to the whole field of creation; it was an acceptance of the belief that the final nature of "world-stuff", to use Eddington's phrase, is spiritual. On this (I) ground E.Vipont Brown was right in saying:-

" It is safe therefore to say that science and experience alike teach us that Light Within is not a theological dogma; it is a biological fact."

The freedom from theological creed or official declarations of a dogmatic type which resulted in the open-minded attitude of the 20th.century Quaker not only made the findings of history, psychology, etc, welcome, but extended a welcome to the scientist. The outstanding Quaker representative of the scientific mind is Sir Arthur S. Eddington, and he has found it possible to reconcile his Quaker outlook with his profound scientific knowledge. Sir Arthur's first contribution to the task of harmonizing scientific knowledge with religious experience is in the way

he has made clear the differentiation established between the real and the concrete. He has said that by an analysis, an investigation, an enquiry which takes for its subject matter "aether, electrons, and other physical machinery we cannot reach conscious man and render count of what is apprehended in his consciousness...." ⁽¹⁾ The sense of moral responsibility which makes a man responsive to the truth and a seeker after the same, whether it be scientific or religious, is not amenable to the scientific technique of investigation, and Eddington writes that he does "not intend to materialize or substantialize mind."

His next step was in the assertion that the concepts of science are only symbolic: we might say that science deals with the accidents of material phenomena, but by its description of what it thus discovers it offers no final explanation of the fundamental substance of life. The scientist has carried his investigations into the nature of the physical world, he has discovered interactions between space, time, and matter, which are astounding, but ⁽²⁾ "Its substance has melted into shadow", it has become a world of symbols leaving man with an epistemological problem. For back of the symbolic world there is a realm of reality

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1. A.S.Eddington: The Nature of the Physical World:p.343.
 2. A.S.Eddington: Science and the Unseen World: p.24.

which the spirit and mind of man ultimately and intimately apprehends, but which "when we attempt to analyse it the intimacy is lost and it is replaced by symbolism."⁽¹⁾ "What is then knowable in this personal, and we may say mystical sense, is outside the formulations of a science built upon the concepts of explicit expression. Science carries us to the edge of the physical only to leave us looking into a realm of spirit, and the counterpart of the latter is to be found in the mental and spiritual nature of man. It is that nature which gives that "interpretation of the symbols which science is admittedly unable to give."⁽²⁾ There is thus no conflict between science and religion; they have contributions which each can make to the other, for they belong to different spheres of experience. Eddington wrote:-⁽³⁾

" In the last century - and I think also in this - there must have been many scientific men who kept their science and religion in watertight compartments. One set of beliefs held good in the laboratory and another set of beliefs in church, and no serious effort was made to harmonize them. The attitude is defensible."

Eddington's scientific belief is thus always tentative, but his religious faith while not clearly defined - it cannot be for language is symbolic - is unchangeable in its significance for him.

The subject matter of scientific investigation, the

1. A.S.Eddington: The Nature of the Physical World: p.322.

2. A.S.Eddington: Science and the Unseen World: p.24.

3. as ref.No.1: p.194.

findings of research, Eddington has likened to what he calls "pointer readings"; they carry a reference to their objects, but do not offer any final explanation of them. But if science is only to be a method of linking pointer reading with pointer reading it will be a very abstract affair - it will indeed be "shadow." To what kind of a background can they be anchored to give some semblance of reality? (I) Eddington answers:-

" If we must embed our schedule of indicator readings in some kind of a background, at least let us accept the only hint we have received as to the significance of the background - namely that it has a nature capable of manifesting itself as mental activity."

So in the realm of the intellect we must seek for that which is to be authoritative in our lives. It is in the rational consciousness of man, the sphere wherein we have those intimate senses of contact with another world of value and reality, that we have direct "knowledge of the Universe." Others had made the Reason the vehicle of God's revelation, others had given it the character of an adversary, but (2) Eddington looked upon it as the "Inner Light." He wrote:-

"I think that this power (reasoning) can be nothing less than a ray proceeding from the light of absolute Truth. a thought proceeding from the absolute Mind. With this guidance we may embark on the adventure of spiritual life uncharted though it be."

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1. A.S.Eddington: The Nature of the Physical World: p.260
 2. A.S.Eddington: Science and Religion; A Symposium: p.130.

Here is the beginning of his religious faith. The consciousness of man "has its roots in the background" of experience which communicates itself in that intimate way which is ineffable. The material evidences of the operation of that which gives reality to the whole, can only be dealt with by human intelligence in the scientific fashion by the use of language which is symbolical - language which describes substance in terms of shadows cast. Man knows that he has this intimate fellowship with the Absolute, not because of what science reveals, but because "in the organ of the brain" there is continually speaking "a voice", which is inward, of God. It is that consciousness which gives value to life; it is that consciousness which is man's "Inner Light." At the conclusion of the Gifford Lectures in 1927 Eddington stated:-

" Why is it that we attach so much truth and importance to the values determined by the mind, unless they are the reflection of the mind of an absolute Valuer. How can that mystic unity with the world, experienced in exceptional moments, continue to feed the soul in the sordid routine of life, unless we can approach the World Spirit in the midst of our cares and duties in the relationship of spirit to Spirit."

We have already taken cognizance of the view that the Light is beyond reason, and there are those who do not accept the scientific positions of Eddington, although the expressions of the latter are characterized by cautiousness and a distaste of dogmatism. The former, of whom Caroline E. Stephen

is an excellent representative, holding the Light to be beyond reason and exhibiting its influence in reason, and held in conjunction with so many divergent theological opinions, feel that it cannot be decisive in settling matters of abstract and speculative nature. These matters are surface ripples of the mind's activity of little effect upon the deeps of calm inner life. Accepting this position does not leave the Light without any influence upon the belief, for it does so affect the "region of intellectual divergence" that the individual who is obedient to it comes (1)
 "nearer and nearer to such truth as makes for edification."

Such an attitude was in complete accordance with the scientific spirit. That influence which operating upon belief, modifies it; revealing itself in moral sensibilities, changes conduct; clothing itself in the esthetic appreciations, gives value to certain reactions of the mind, was, for Eddington, "...the measure of light that comes into our (2)
 experience showing us a way through the unseen world."

Edward Grubb was convinced that the Light was authoritative in its nature because the ultimate source of it was God himself, and because of its nature it was, for Rufus Jones, "sublime", and being divine and within man Silvanus P. Thompson asserted (3)
 "what need should there be of resort to any external authority."

1. Caroline E. Stephen: Light Arising: p.36
 2. A.S. Eddington: Science and the Unseen World: p.55.
 3. Silvanus P. Thompson: The Quest for Truth: p.104.

External authorities are only set up when there has been such a decline in the personal consciousness of contact with the divine that it becomes essential to define what people shall believe so that thereby a basis for unity and work may be provided. Possessing that inner consciousness of an immanent God the individual does not need the support, although he finds in it supporting evidence, of historical record; the Friends "...never cast back their eyes regretfully to the days when their Master had been with them in the body...." ^(I) There were those who, as in former times, recognized the need for some corporate guidance. Eddington himself saw that extravagances could so easily come from an oversensitiveness to esthetic influences or some abnormal pathological condition of the brain. He felt that the "intimate knowledge of the reality behind the symbols", the "Inner Light", was not to be "implicitly trusted without control." There was a corporate expression of the spiritual life which would provide something of a norm by which the individual could test his own life, but we must recognize that mental and spiritual aberration can characterize group as well as individual life, and in the final judgment the individual must test both his own experience and that of the group. In ordinary circumstances, however, we readily

see how the reference to the marks of the Light's activity in others will help " ...as a preservative against personal bias, and spiritual pride and self-deception."

There were many who realized that the acceptance of the "Inner Light" as the final authority for life was fraught with serious difficulties. The variety of personal endowment, the idiosyncracies of individual character, if not leading to extravagances, which some rightly fear, do issue in many differences of interpretation of the common experience of an innate divine manifestation. John Wilhelm Rowntree, at the beginning of the modern period, suggested that if he surrendered the guidance, though limited, of external authority, because of some inner sense of divinity, (I) he must discover:-

" ...within the limits of human consciousness an identification or meeting-point between the soul of man and the unseen Spirit."

Where could he, and others, discover such an identity of man and God? Where or how could it be, as it were, objectified so that they could study it and so discover the guidance so needed for the religious life? It was necessary to have faith focussed upon some permanent and unchanging fact to which succeeding generations could turn for any readjustment of their ideas believed to be essential

or to secure something of the original inspiration of their faith. It has been the recognition of this need which has turned men's thoughts back again to the fact of the historical person of Jesus. The christological questions of theology have always proved difficult for those who have centred religious life in a subjective personal revelation. Howntree believed that in the view that in Jesus there was a "meeting-point of identification" between God and man such questions and needs were fully met. The inner life of Jesus was the ground of a blending of the human and the divine, and the words which he spoke, the gospel, partook of the divine-human character of the condition in the inner consciousness of Jesus which gave rise to them. It is not explicitly stated, but it is implied, that Jesus was not only a revelation of God seeking after men, but also of man seeking after God. The significance of Jesus is not found in his miraculous conception by, or unique relationship with, God, but in a progressive unfolding in his life of the dual potentiality of all men -it is based on an achieved relationship. That relationship was one in which God seeking to express himself in human life was able to do so in a full measure in Jesus, because Jesus as a man, by his loyalty to that of God which was within, made it possible to the greatest extent. G.R.Hibbert

(I)

wrote concerning Jesus:-.

" He was a real man. He was a complete man and therefore completely blended the human with the divine. The Inner Light dwelt in him in full measure."

The spoken gospel, which was the expression of what is in all men's lives, became that by which individual experience of the "Inner Light" could be judged. In Fox's words "it would speak to one's condition."

It was often alleged against the Quakers that by positing that there is a universal bestowal of Divine Light they had made the Incarnation of none effect, rendered the doctrine of salvation by Jesus meaningless, and taken away any distinctive contribution the Christian revelation might have made to life. We can see how in the foregoing some attempt has been made, in the modern period, to meet that charge. The consensus appears to be that Jesus was unique because, as a man, he experienced an unusual sense of union with God, and the close association thus established between God and man - man at his highest and without sin - was responsible for a change in the attitude of God to man. The element of God in Jesus established a new relationship with human will as it was in Jesus, and out of this^a change resulted in the Godhead. That experience of a new contact

I. Gerald R. Hibbert: The Inner Light and Modern Thought: p.56.

with man, within the Godhead, they believed could only be termed "Christ in God," and the influence which it had upon God's attitude to man, which can be discovered in a knowledge of truth and historical record, could only be called the Holy Spirit. God, they believed, revealed himself in a threefold manner; as God he was the Absolute of all time; in Jesus he was a revelation in time; and in the Holy Spirit, or the "Inner Light", he was known by his influence upon man, and the nature of the relationships subsisting between these three aspects were not understood by the reason of man, but were revealed in the mystical moods of inner experience.

(1)

Edward Grubb wrote concerning the advent of Christ:-

"that a Timeless and Omnipresent Spirit, in some sense one with God, took upon Him the limitations of time and space and finite humanity."

(2)

While Alfred E. Pease, on this same point, wrote:-

" The attitude of Friends to the doctrine of the Trinity is difficult to define. It probably will not be unfair to them to say it is in their opinion a human device to express what is inexpressible as it is incomprehensible."

Confusion in Quaker thinking sometimes arose from the dual use of the word Jesus to indicate his revelation in time, and his influence through time on men's lives. Now with a

1. Edward Grubb: The Historic and Inward Christ: p.31.
2. Alfred E. Pease: The Diaries of Edward Pease: p.6.

recognition of this they are nearer to the development of
 an adequate Christology, and, as G.K.Hibbert has said, (I)
 "as a matter of practise Jesus becomes for us the Light."
 They have realized too that such a Christology does not
 have anything to fear from the conceptions of Evolution, for
 the "achievement theory" of Christ can be conformed to the
 evolutionary hypotheses that moral and spiritual values have
 resulted from a progressive realization of latent possibilities
 and an adjustment to a changing appreciation of the
 significance of the mental and physical concomitants of life.

In our study of the period of the separations we
 observed how at the beginning of the 19th.century there
 gradually emerged a sense of social responsibility. George
 Fox and the Scholastics had, according to the ideas of their
 times, expressed something of their religious outlook in
 demands for social justice, but the Quietist period had
 resulted in a withdrawal of Quaker interest from the problems
 of our corporate and national life. No study of the modern
 period would be complete which failed to note the expansion
 of the social sense of the 19th.century into a passion for
 social service like that which we have witnessed in the 20th.
 In almost all fields of ameliorative or humane endeavour
 the Quakers of this century have given unstintingly of their

best service. The doctrine of the "Inner Light", the belief that God is immanent in all men, rightly understood, and its ramifications in conduct realized, leads to an increased sense of the urgency of those works which can make more possible the realization by the individual of "God within." It was this doctrine which had made Quakerism a great democracy in which, by plain speech, absence of social distinctions, a minimum of conventional deference, the spiritual equality of all was recognized, and it was this idea which blossomed into social service in the 20th. century. It has not been simply an anxiety to foster ameliorative services, but has been a robust quickening of conscience which has expressed itself in a desire for economic and political change. Again and again in these later years Quakers have taken leading parts in the work of new political groupings. It should also be said that for some the theological implications of Quaker belief have been too involved for them fully to understand and appreciate, and out of this difficulty they have found a way by engaging their energies in such works. It has, however, been acknowledged by the Quakers themselves that in this social work they are again entering into the "goodly heritage" of the "first publishers of truth," and that it should always

be identified with their belief in the "Inner Light." This work has been the result not of any increased awareness of objective need, but of a progressive unfolding within man of the purpose of God revealed in the influence of the "Inner Light." What we call the social sense is only one facet of the "Inner Light", but any total awareness of the latter will lead to some developement of the former, which in truth can be said to belong to the Light. ^(I) The anxiety of those responsible for the inauguration and maintenance of some types of this service that this connection between belief and practise should be owned is to be seen in what was stated in a pamphlet, "Quaker Thought in International Service," issued by the Council for International Service in 1921. We read:-

" Friends are not better than other people, and they will co-operate with all religious and humane forces seeking the same ends. But they are under the special compulsion of a great idea. To merge their work in a general humanitarian activity would be to hinder themselves in setting forth the indwelling spirit as the central and essential factor in the call to the humane life. To merge their work in a general christian activity would be to weaken their testimony for the direct access of the spirit of man to God without priest, or outward sacrament, or set forms of worship."

The doctrine of the "Inner Light", as we have so often noted, arose from the attempt to describe the source

I. See G.K.Hibbert: The Inner Light and Modern Thought;p.II.

and meaning of mystical experience. Because that experience is of such an ineffable character, and its content beyond any adequate expression in verbal form, because it is never an uniform experience produced by the individual's submission to a recognized technique, but changes from individual to individual, it follows that the only way to appreciate its meaning and value is to have experience of it. As William James expressed it, "mystical states are more like states of feeling than like states of intellect." (I)

The language applied to it is only symbolic and indicative of the intimacy of the experience. So, again and again, we discover in the virile periods of Quakerism's history an emphasis is placed upon the essential need for an experience of the "Inner Light," a felt apprehension of its power within. The one word, which above all others, describes the Quaker spirit is that of "experience." Between inner experience and conduct a more real sense of connection can be established than by seeking to make the explanations of the experience the reasons for the conduct. But the latter, like the mystical experience itself, will be spontaneous. In this modern period there is a general stress placed upon the need for that experience. One writer describing this tendency (2) has said:-

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1. William James: Varieties of Religious Experience: p.380.
 2. William E. Hocking: The Meaning of God in Human Experience: p.353.

" And as the mystic has been hard put to it to tell what it is that he knows, he has in our later and Western world had increasing recourse to reporting the psychology of his experience, in lieu of its cognitive contents."

The emphasis has been upon this point because, while the increase in knowledge applicable to an understanding and explanation of the mystical experience has led to a disappearance of the dogmatic spirit and an unwillingness to accept any explanation as finally conclusive, the experience itself is authoritative for the subject of it, and has pragmatical value for the conduct of life - "it comes with the very breath of life." E.Vipont Brown claimed that this experiential approach to the problems of religious belief is the adoption of the "inductive method of reasoning," and constitutes it a scientific enquiry. "Indeed," writes Brown, "I would suggest that the Society of Friends is the only religious organization which has ever applied the scientific method to theology."⁽¹⁾ The modern Quaker is just as keen in holding to experience, as apart from any intellectual assent to a creed or acceptance of an objective authority, as the final basis of any contact or communion with God as George Fox and the early adherents of the movement. Eddington himself has said that Quakerism is a religion

I. E.Vipont Brown: Quaker Aspects of Truth: p.14.

(1)

primarily of experience. he wrote:-

" And if religion is not an attitude towards experience, if it is just a creed postulating an ineffable being who has no contact with ourselves, it is not the kind of religion which our Society stands for."

And the primary purpose of the silent meeting is to make more possible the typical Quaker experience. We have said that this emphasis upon experience is a return to something of the original attitude of the Society, for the early leaders, while anxious that their followers should have correct beliefs, were convinced that an experience of God "speaking to their condition" was fundamental. Rufus M.

(2)

Jones writing on this topic said:-

" There is a third aspect to the doctrine of the Inner Light. It is used, perhaps most frequently, to indicate the truth that whatever is spiritual must be within the realm of personal experience, that is to say, the ground of religion is in the individual's own heart and not somewhere outside him."

It can easily be understood how, if the language descriptive of the mystical experience is symbolical, very little of the underlying significance of the writings and messages of the mystics can be appreciated apart from the seeker being conditioned by some similar experience as that which gave rise to the expressions. It is the experience of an intimate sense of an immanent ineffable reality by which the latent

1. A.S.Eddington: Science and the Unseen World: p.25.

2. Rufus M.Jones: Social Law in the Spiritual World: p.169.

content of mystical expressions is understood. If one should ask the question how the Quaker may be sure that he is not deceived by what is "pure subjectivism" he can only
(I)
explain:-

" We discover religious experience to be the most liberating and power-producing force known, and confidently assert that there must be truth behind it."

For these people the validity of their peculiar views has often been found in the application of the scriptural test, "by their fruits ye shall know them", and one cannot help but feel that the more the Quaker has been true to the views of the framers of their unique testimony, the more evident has been the fruit of true Christian character and the more powerful their witness in the world. Always the task of developing a complete theology and philosophy of life and experience is beckoning the mind of man on, and if Quakerism cannot present to the world a fully comprehensive system of belief it is only because, even as Fox in his day and many in ours, they are conditioned by the progress of thought of their own time. Religion, to be effective, must be a progressive unfolding of man's possibilities allied with an increasing knowledge and experience of God. The doctrine of the "Inner Light" is

I. G.K.Hibbert: The Inner Light and Modern Thought: p.64.

one that can be harmonized with such an interpretation of the nature of religion, and also brought into agreement with the generally accepted views of the revelation of the historic Jesus. It is that doctrine, variously interpreted, which has unified in spirit the diverse elements of Quakerism to-day and brought back to it something of its ancient power: it is that which gives distinctiveness to the Quaker outlook and religious life. But we should once more, in this final paragraph, stress the freedom of thought which has characterized the modern period of Quaker history, and made difficult the delineation of any interpretation of the central doctrine as that most commonly held by the Society at large. We cannot, however, better sum up what appears to be the dominant feature expressed in the kaleidoscopic picture of the belief of the modern period (I) than by quoting the simple words of John W. Graham. He wrote:-

" The belief in the Christ Within is held in the Society of Friends to-day with the same whole-hearted insistence as it was in the early days."

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We see this likeness on three vital and fundamental points, viz:-

1. The doctrine of the "Inward Light, Life, Word, and Seed."
2. The belief in direct revelation to the individual and the consequent uselessness of outward rituals and sacraments.
3. The conception that no bodily act, like sacraments of the Lord's Supper, can give inward spiritual reality.

We have already noted how the mystical and spiritual movement became completely divorced from the Reformation, and in the experience of Scwenckfeld we see this viewpoint justified. The Duke of Liegnitz was a friend of Scwenckfeld for some years, in fact the latter was an acceptable advisor of the former for sometime. When the Anabaptists were undergoing oppression Scwenckfeld advised the Duke to treat them with kindness. The Duke, however, realized that he was in danger of becoming separated from the general Reformation movement and that to give evidence of his sincerity in holding to it he must either punish or expel Scwenckfeld. Instead of finding the Duke ready to listen to his plea for tolerance towards the Anabaptists, Scwenckfeld found it necessary to leave Liegnitz in 1529. He now travelled all over Europe preaching to the people until he died in the year 1561.